



Understanding the Importance and Practice of Credible Leadership at Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS) and Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support (PEO CS&CSS)

Chad P. Stocker

March 30, 2017



**Submitted to Lawrence Technological University College
of Management in partial fulfillment of the degree of
Master of Global Leadership and Management**



**Submitted to Defense Acquisition University in partial
fulfillment of the requirement of the Senior Service
College Fellowship**

Approval Page

Title: Understanding the Importance and Practice of Credible Leadership at Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS) and Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support (PEO CS&CSS)

Author: Chad P. Stocker

Organization: Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS)

Date of Paper: March 30, 2017

IRB Approval: Lawrence Technological University

Date: December 13, 2016

OPSEC Approval:

Date: June 1, 2017

Submission to DAU Library:

Date: June 1, 2017

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
Abstract	7
Chapter 1 - Introduction.....	8
Background: PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS	9
The Importance of Credible Leadership.....	10
Problem Statement	12
Purpose of this Study.....	12
Research Question.....	12
Conceptual Model	13
Significance of This Research.....	14
Overview of the Research Methodology.....	14
Limitations of the Study	15
Validity of the Research	15
Chapter 2 – Literature Review.....	17
Introduction	17
Purpose of this Study.....	18
Research Question.....	18
Credible Leadership Traits and Skills Overview	18
Credible Leadership Traits	20
Credible Leadership Skills	23
Credible Leadership Summary	26
Chapter 3 – Research Methodology.....	28

Research Perspective.....	28
Research Design	28
Conceptual Model	29
Data Collection Process	29
Data Collection.....	30
Interview Questionnaire	31
Thematic Analysis.....	31
Chapter 4 – Findings	32
Demographics Responses.....	32
Open-Ended Responses	33
Likert Scale Responses.....	35
Open-Ended Final Responses.....	56
Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations.....	59
Conclusions	59
Recommendations	63
References.....	65
Glossary of Acronyms and Terms	68
Appendix A – IRB Training Certificate.....	69
Appendix B – IRB Approval	70
Appendix C – Focused Group Interview Confidentiality Agreement	71
Appendix D – Focused Group Interview Questionnaire.....	72
Appendix E – OPSEC Approval.....	78
Appendix F –Author Biography	79

List of Figures

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Credible Leadership.....	12
Figure 2: Conceptual Model of Credible Leadership.....	29

List of Tables

Table 1: Credible Leadership Traits.....	19
Table 2: Credible Leadership Skills.....	20
Table 3: Demographic Experience of Participants.....	32
Table 4: Overall Assessment of Leadership Credibility.....	33
Table 5: External Stakeholder Viewpoint of Leadership Credibility.....	34
Table 6: External Stakeholder Viewpoint of Leadership Effectiveness.....	35
Table 7: Importance of Honest Trait.....	36
Table 8: Practice of Honest Trait.....	36
Table 9: Honest Trait – Importance vs. Practice.....	37
Table 10: Importance of Confident Trait.....	38
Table 11: Practice of Confident Trait.....	38
Table 12: Confident Trait – Importance vs. Practice.....	39
Table 13: Importance of Risk-Taker Trait.....	39
Table 14: Practice of Risk-Taker Trait.....	40
Table 15: Risk-Taker Trait – Importance vs. Practice.....	40
Table 16: Importance of Decisive Trait.....	41
Table 17: Practice of Decisive Trait.....	42
Table 18: Decisive Trait – Importance vs. Practice.....	43
Table 19: Importance of Adaptive Trait.....	44
Table 20: Practice of Adaptive Trait.....	44
Table 21: Adaptive Trait – Importance vs. Practice.....	45
Table 22: Importance of Competence Skill.....	46
Table 23: Practice of Competence Skill.....	46
Table 24: Competence Skill – Importance vs. Practice.....	47
Table 25: Importance of Planner Skill.....	48
Table 26: Practice of Planner Skill.....	49
Table 27: Planner Skill – Importance vs. Practice.....	49
Table 28: Importance of Interpersonal Skill.....	50
Table 29: Practice of Interpersonal Skill.....	50
Table 30: Interpersonal Skill – Importance vs. Practice.....	51
Table 31: Importance of Communicator Skill.....	52
Table 32: Practice of Communicator Skill.....	52
Table 33: Communicator Skill – Importance vs. Practice.....	53
Table 34: Importance of Emotionally Intelligent Skill.....	54
Table 35: Practice of Emotionally Intelligent Skill.....	54
Table 36: Emotionally Intelligent Skill – Importance vs. Practice.....	55
Table 37: Credible Leadership Comments.....	56
Table 38: Credible Leadership Traits Analysis.....	60
Table 39: Credible Leadership Skills Analysis.....	61

Table 40: Interview Results for Credible Leadership Traits.....	62
Table 41: Interview Results for Credible Leadership Skills.....	63

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to enhance understanding of the importance of credible leadership and the extent to which it was practiced at Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS) and Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support (PEO CS&CSS).

This study used a qualitative research methodology with the data obtained from focused group interviews. The data was provided by a focused group of eight Product Managers (PMs) or Product Directors (PDs) from both respective PEOs. The literature review confirmed that credible leaders possess specific traits and skills that increase their credibility and ultimately their leadership effectiveness. The focused interviews highlighted that all of the credible leadership traits and skills identified in the literature are important, but that practice of certain traits and skills lagged importance. Thus, there is an opportunity to improve the practice of several traits and skills important to effective leadership. The study also found that the amount of PEO experience affects perceptions of the importance of these traits and skills.

The results of the study highlighted an opportunity for the PEOs to better align the importance and practice of the credible leadership traits and skills in the future. It is recommended that further investigation be undertaken to determine why PEO experience influences perceptions of the credible leadership traits and skills.

Additional information received in this study also suggests that the hiring practices within the PEOs might be leading to cultural and morale issues that should be further investigated in a future command climate survey.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

“The most valuable thing any one of us has is our credibility; once credibility is gone, it can never be recovered. Credibility, or our capacity to have other people trust what we say, is essential to any successful acquisition professional. Trust in our credibility matters when we interact with supervisors, subordinates, customers (military operators), the media, Congress and industry – in other words with everyone we encounter. Once we lose credibility with any one of these groups, we aren’t far from losing it – and our effectiveness – with all of them.”

(Kendall, 2014, p. 2)

The key to becoming a successful acquisition professional in the Department of Defense (DoD) is to build credibility throughout one’s career. As Mr. Frank Kendall, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USD AT&L), stated in his 2014 Defense AT&L newsletter, “....our credibility is our most valuable possession....,” but “Destroying it only takes a moment... despite a career long effort building it” (Kendall, 2014, p. 4).

Mr. Kendall’s comments resonate within the acquisition community because the DoD is continuously under fiscal scrutiny and oversight by the United States Congress. Over the past decade, DoD has experienced a declining defense budget and has had to do more with less. In 2013, as a result of declining budgets and increased oversight, the Office of the USD AT&L developed the Better Buying Power (BBP) initiative. The objective of BBP was to deliver the needed Warfighter capabilities within the constraints of the declining budget at a better value to the taxpayer by improving the way DoD conducts business (“Better Buying Power”, 2016).

In 2013, as part of the Better Buying Power (BBP) initiative, Mr. Kendall also issued a memorandum that highlighted the importance of Key Leadership Positions (KLP) and the criteria for fulfilling those positions. The memorandum mandated that all Key Leadership Positions (KLP) for all Major Defense Acquisition Programs (MDAP) and each Major Automated Information System (MAIS) (Acquisition Category (ACAT) I and IA) programs “... are filled by properly

qualified members of the Armed Forces or full-time employees of the Department of Defense (DoD). KLPs require a significant level of authority commensurate with the responsibility and accountability for acquisition program success.” (Kendall, 2013, p. 1).

Mr. Kendall stated that “We cannot afford to add risk to our programs by placing unqualified or unprepared personnel into KLPs.” and outlined the minimum education, experience, and cross-functional competencies that a KLP should possess. There are several positions listed as KLPs in Mr. Kendall’s memo, but none more critical than the Program Executive Officer (PEO) (Kendall, 2013, p. 2).

This research paper describes the traits and skills that define credible leadership, and why credible leaders are among the most effective leaders. It provides an understanding of the importance placed on and the practice of credible leadership at Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS) and Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support (PEO CS&CSS).

Background: PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS

The PEOs are chartered to design, develop, test, develop and deliver portfolio based capabilities to the Warfighter. They are in a position of leadership that can make the single biggest impact in providing capability to the Warfighter. Their success in providing this capability is largely dependent on their credibility as a leader. The DoD Acquisition process is challenging, and requires credible leadership to be effective. Effective PEOs possess the traits and skills required to be a credible leader.

PEO GCS is located in Warren, MI and is responsible for providing world-class affordable, relevant and sustainable ground combat equipment to Joint Warfighters. Programs include the Abrams Main Battle Tank, the Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicle, the Stryker Infantry Carrier, the

Heavy Evacuation Recovery Combat Utility Lift and Evacuation System (HERCULES), the Army's new Armored Multi-Purpose Vehicle (AMPV), and a host of other combat vehicle platforms. The PEO GCS mission is stated as "Modernize, sustain and transform the Army's portfolio of premier ground combat systems". The PEO GCS vision is stated as "A team of trusted professionals delivering dominant ground combat systems for America's Warfighters." (PEO GCS, 2017).

PEO CS&CSS is also located in Warren, MI and is "responsible for hundreds of diverse Army systems primarily related to sustainment, spanning the range of Army transportation, engineering, ordnance, quartermaster, and some maneuver portfolio platforms." (PEO CS&CSS, 2017). Programs of record include all transportation ant tactical assets Heavy, Medium and Light vehicle classes of wheeled vehicles), all of the Army's watercraft assets, the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles, expeditionary energy and sustainment systems, and several assets within the Army's Force Projection portfolio. The PEO CS&CSS mission is stated as "Lead an innovative, disciplined lifecycle management team that enables America's warfighters by unburdening Soldiers in the field and constantly providing an improving the integrated, combat-enabling systems they need to dominate the full spectrum of Joint and Unified Land Operations.". The PEO CS&CSS vision is stated as "An accomplished, professional acquisition team delivering effective, affordable combat-enabling capabilities before the point of need." (PEO CS&CSS, 2017).

The Importance of Credible Leadership

Leadership is not a popularity contest, but all things being equal, people work harder for someone they like and deem credible. Followers demand credible leadership and their level of commitment to an organization is directly related the leader's credibility. Followers gravitate

towards credible leaders in an organization because those leaders make positive impacts on their follower's lives (Kouzes & Posner, 2011).

Establishing leadership credibility is a process where leaders earn the trust and confidence of their followers through effective actions. The process involves actions that fall in line with the saying "Do What You Say You Will Do" (DWYSYWD). When a credible leader follows the DWYSYWD mantra it positively influences morale, performance and often inspire s positive organizational transformation. Organizations with credible leaders often have a higher sense of pride, team spirit, shared values, loyalty, and commitment to the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2011).

A credible leader earns trust and builds confidence with his or her followers. Credibility is a prerequisite to leadership and it is what drives followers to contribute to the common vision and mission of the organization. The credible traits and skills that leaders apply increase or decrease their credibility with their followers, and ultimately drive followers' commitment to the organization. Follower commitment is important to organizational success and the underlying reason why credible leadership is not a measured by the leader, but rather by followers (Kouzes & Posner, 2011).

The dynamic relationship between leaders and followers has substantiated the need for followers to believe in their leaders before they are willing to follow them. A credible leader earns trust and confidence through the traits that he possess and uses in his daily actions. A credible leader is honest, forward-looking, inspiring and competent. A credible leader does what he says he is going to do at both the individual and organization level. Credible leaders make a positive difference in the lives of their followers in the workplace (Kouzes & Posner, 2011).

A credible leader possesses many positive traits that define his overall character and the skills that he utilizes to drive his effective actions. The utilization of their traits and skills in actions help credible leaders earn and retain credibility with their followers that results in effective leadership. This is why “Credibility is the foundation for leadership” (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 15).

Problem Statement

In 2017, the U.S. DoD is operating at a significantly reduced defense budget and is being tasked to find ways to be more effective within those funding constraints. In addition, the election of a new President and his administration will likely result in new leadership across all critical acquisition positions of the Services within DoD. Reduced budgets and new leadership direction will create uncertainty and present a daunting challenge to the Army PEOs. It is not uncommon for program decisions to be delayed or postponed when new leadership is being nominated and confirmed. Taking all of these factors into consideration, 2017 will require the PEO leadership to execute programs flawlessly.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to enhance understanding of the importance of credible leadership and the extent to which it is practiced at Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS) and Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support (PEO CS&CSS).

Research Question

This research study addressed three questions related to credible leadership:

- How much importance does PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS leadership place on the individual traits and skills that constitute credible leadership?

- To what extent does the PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS leadership practice the traits and skills they have identified as important?
- What actions can be taken to improve the practice of important credible leadership skills and traits?

Conceptual Model

As shown in Figure 1, credible traits and skills define credible leadership, which leads to leadership effectiveness. The PEO leadership is effective when they deliver capability to the Army warfighters on cost, on time and at the expected performance levels that enable warfighters to fight and win our nation's wars. Despite the differences in the vision and mission of each respective PEO organization, at the end of the day, they are measured on their ability effectively deliver dominating capabilities to our warfighters. The alignment of credible traits and skills within the PEO leadership can result in leadership effectiveness and will be further evaluated in this research study.

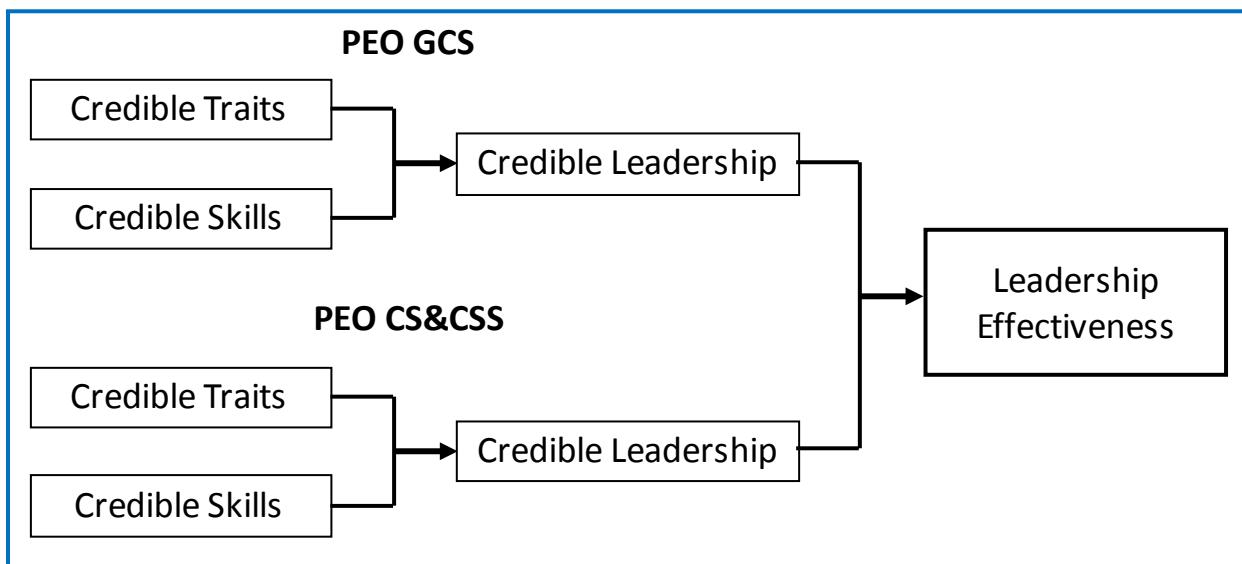


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Credible Leadership

Significance of This Research

Credible leaders possess traits and skills that influence morale and inspire positive actions that lead to organization performance (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). This study provides an understanding of the importance and practice of credible leadership within PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS based on the assessment of a focused group composed of Product Managers (PM) and Product Directors (PD) that manage programs within both respective PEOs. Their assessment will provide the foundation for further leadership growth and training opportunities, should the leadership deem it appropriate and necessary.

Overview of the Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative data will be obtained through focused group interviews. The data will be provided by a focused group of eight PMs or PDs from both respective PEOs. If more time is available, the focus group could be increased with proper approvals and allow for a better understanding of the importance and practice of credible leadership within the respective PEOs. However, due to recent DoD policy changes in obtaining approval for comprehensive surveys, the focused group is limited to less than nine participants. Therefore, a focused group of eight PMs and PDs will be utilized to supplement the qualitative research in this study.

To ensure as much diversity as possible within the limitations of eight interviewees, the focused group is comprised of an even mix of four PMs or PDs from PEO GCS and four from PEO CS&CSS. In addition, two of the four PMs or PDs are military officers and two are civilians. The mix of civilians and officers provides a good baseline and variety of perspectives for better understanding the importance and practice of credible leadership within both respective PEOs.

This qualitative research study will define the traits and skills that define a credible leader and will assess the importance and practice of these traits and skills within the PEOs. The focused group interviews will be conducted in person, will be non-attributional and all participants will remain anonymous.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in scope to an assessment of the traits and skills that define credible leadership to gain an understanding of the importance and practice they have on acquisition within the DoD. It is limited to the perspective of eight participants which does not allow of tests of statistical significance. Despite these limitations, it will provide a good overview of the key areas that are important, practiced and have opportunity for growth and improvement.

This study is focused on the acquisition leadership within PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS and makes the assumption that credibility of the PEO leadership can be viewed through the vantage point of the PM and PD that reside within the PEOs. However, there are other direct functional support functions within the PEO that have not been accounted for in this study, such as Engineering, Logistics, Business Management, and Contract management to name a few. They too have an opinion on the credibility of the leadership as well as the traits and skills that they possess.

Validity of the Research

The interview guide for this study has been reviewed and approved by the Lawrence Technological University (LTU) Internal Review Board (IRB) and the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Senior Service College Fellowship (SSCF) advisory board. The final report is approved through The TACOM LCMC OPSEC and public affairs process.

Interview participants in the study are PMs and PDs that have worked inside both PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS that have a significant amount of acquisition experience and firsthand knowledge of their leadership business acumen and the direct relationship of how their followers perceive the leadership's guidance and direction. All of the participants are board-selected that validates their leadership experience and qualifications to lead their respective organizations. They rely on their leadership for guidance, direction and decisions. They rely on their followers to execute the mission and vision of their respective organization. Alignment of leadership guidance and follower actions is critical to success as an acquisition leader.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter highlights the review of several sources of information define the traits and skills that enable a leader to earn and retain credibility in an organization that ultimately leads to effective leadership and a successful organization.

Introduction

A successful acquisition professional in the Department of Defense (DoD) builds and earns credibility throughout one's entire career. As Mr. Frank Kendall, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (USD AT&L), stated in his 2014 Defense AT&L newsletter, “our credibility is our most valuable possession”, but “Destroying it only takes a moment” despite a career long effort building it (Kendall, 2014, p. 4).

Mr. Kendall’s comments resonate within the acquisition community because the DoD is continuously under fiscal scrutiny and oversight by the United States Congress. Over the past decade, DoD has experienced a declining defense budget and has had to do more with less. In 2013, as a result of the declining budgets and oversight, the Office of the USD AT&L developed the Better Buying Power (BBP) initiative. The objective of BBP was to deliver the needed Warfighter capabilities within the constraints of the declining budget at a better value to the taxpayer and Warfighter by improving the way that DoD conducts business (“Better Buying Power”, 2016).

This research paper describes what traits and skills define credible leadership and why credible leaders are effective. It also provides an understanding of the importance placed on and the practice of credible leadership at Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS) and Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support (PEO CS&CSS).

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to enhance understanding of the importance of credible leadership, and the extent to which it is practiced at Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS) and Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support (PEO CS&CSS).

Research Question

This research study addressed three questions related to credible leadership:

- How much importance does PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS leadership place on the individual traits and skills that constitute credible leadership?
- To what extent does the PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS leadership practice the traits and skills they have identified as important?
- What actions can be taken to improve the practice of important credible leadership skills and traits?

Credible Leadership Traits and Skills Overview

A credible leader possesses many traits that define their overall character and the skills that they utilize to drive their actions. The utilization of their credible traits and skills in actions help them earn and retain credibility with their followers. Ultimately, a leader's credible traits and skills provide the framework for leadership effectiveness.

The credibility of a leader is undeniably important, but documenting the traits and skills that define a credible leader is a daunting task. There are a lot of reputable sources that list the different traits and skills or characteristics that define a credible leader and how that leads to effective organizational performance. This research study evaluated a laundry list of sources and used thematic analysis to bin them into categories of traits and skills. Once all of the sources were

binned into trait and skill categories, the categories that aligned with the most sources were narrowed down as the most relevant and utilized as the top traits and skills to define credible leadership. These sources and the definitions that they used for the traits and skills are shown below in Tables 1 and 2.

In Table 1 below, the traits as defined by several different sources consolidated into five different traits that define an effective leader. As one will note, the terms used by the sources are not always exact, but based on the sources description, it aligns with the trait definition. As one can see, a credible leader is honest, confident, a risk-taker, decisive, and adaptive.

Table 1. Credible Leadership Traits

TRAITS	Sources								
	(Kouzes & Posner, 2011)	(Heitzman, 2015)	(Root III, 2016)	("10 traits", 2012)	(Roach, 2016)	(Iacocca, 2007)	("Small Business Leadership", 2016)	(Gleeson, 2016)	("Effective Leader", 2015)
HONEST	Honest	Honest & Integrity	Honesty	Honest	Caring Individual Ethical	Character	Integrity	Respect of the Team	Values Honesty
CONFIDENT		Confidence		Confident		Conviction	Confidence	Faith in their beliefs	Confident
RISK-TAKER					Risk-Taker	Creative		Know the Team	Takes Risks
DECISIVE		Ability to Delegate	Accountability	Decisive	Resolute	Courage	Determination	Make the hard choice	Decisive
ADAPTIVE		Flexible & Understanding			Balanced	Curiosity	Empathy	Serve a greater cause	

Source: Adapted from sources listed in each column

In similar fashion, you will see in Table 2 that a credible leader possesses several skills that enable them to earn and retain credibility within their organization. A credible leader is competent, a planner, interpersonal, a communicator, emotionally intelligent.

Table 2. Credible Leadership Skills

SKILLS	Sources								
	(Kouzes & Posner, 2011)	(Heitzman, 2015)	(Root III, 2016)	("10 traits", 2012)	(Roach, 2016)	(Iacobca, 2007)	("Small Business Leadership", 2016)	(Gleeson, 2016)	("Effective Leader", 2015)
COMPETENT	Competent Discover your self Develop Capacity	Hard Working and Committed to the Job	Education Competence	Self-Aware Assertive	Modest	Competent	Humility	Push People to be their best	
PLANNER	Forward-Looking Affirm Shared Values		Focused	Focused	Visionary Dedicated to the Cause	Common Sense	Vision	Articulate a Clear vision	Conscientious
INTERPERSONAL	Appreciate Constituents Inspiring Sustain Hope	Positive Attitude & Sense of Humor Influential & Inspiring	Actions Respect Loyal	Passionate Empowering	Motivational Sense of Humor	Charisma	Passion Respect Humor	Know that people are the key to success Do not Lead by Force	Inspires and motivates Sense of Humor
COMMUNICATOR	Serve a Purpose	Communicate Respectful & Trusting	Trust	Communicate	Clear Communicator	Communicate	Communication	Focus on helping the team	Communicates Well
EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT		Fair	Detractors	Humble	Self-Control				

Source: Adapted from sources listed in each column

Credible Leadership Traits

Honest

Kouzes and Posner have been studying the leadership and the topic of credibility for a long time. They are often cited by other sources and have developed the reputation within academia as reputable sources. Over several years and iterations of leadership surveys, the leadership trait of Honesty always surfaces to the top over and over again as the most important. “Honesty earns the respect of others and fosters their confidence that leaders can be trusted to follow through on their commitments.” (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 10)

The honest trait covers several other descriptive traits within the category. Kouzes and Posner associate truthfulness, integrity, trustworthy and character into the honest trait category (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). Dale Roach associates a caring and ethical individual as an honest individual. Roach states that leaders that care for their people and the mission that they represent

are very effective. He also states that those individuals have to be ethical and have a strong moral base. “There is nothing more defeatist than a dishonest or lying leader.” (Roach, 2016, p. 4).

Confidence

“As a leader, you have to be the confident one”. A leader who shows that they are in control, helps build trust with their subordinates. It shows that they aren’t afraid to tackle any challenges that come their way and that provides comfort to the organization (Heitzman, 2015, p. 2).

Brent Gleeson states that in order for a leader to be effective, they have to have faith in their beliefs. Without the faith or confidence, you can’t expect others to consider you a leader. Once the leader’s confidence is evident combined with effective communication skills, the followers will become motivated and inspired to achieve exceptional performance (Gleeson, 2016).

Risk-Taker

Credible leaders bring positive change often through the execution of emerging business trends. Usually emerging trends come with risk, but it is important for a leader to recognize that calculated risks need to be made. Risk can lead to failure, but as a leader you can’t let it hold you back. If you don’t find new approaches that involve risk, you might not be able to get to the desired result. Calculated risks are much better than spontaneous risks and it is on the leader to know the difference (“Effective Leader”, 2015).

In Lee Iacocca’s book, “Where have all the leader’s gone?”, he highlighted his 9Cs of leadership. One of his nine Cs is Creative and he states that “A leader must be willing to look at different ways of doing things”. If you continue to do the same thing that you have always done, you will likely always get the same result as you got before. It certainly isn’t likely to improve

and therefore being creative as a leader is important with a changing world (Iacocca & Whitney, 2007, p. 5).

Decisive

Credible leaders are often called on to make timely decisions that have great significance for an organization. This is not to be confused with impulsive decision. These decisions are made with critical thought where potential options are weighed, considered and vetted in a timely and orderly fashion. It requires the leader to know when to act and to take ownership of the decisions that they make (“10 Traits”, 2012).

A credible leader is accountable for their decisions and actions. When a leader makes a mistake or the outcome does not produce the desired result, a credible leader owns it. They don’t place blame on others in the organization, they accept it and take the heat. By owning the decisions and the results the leader build credibility with his leadership, peers and followers (Root III, 2016).

Adaptive

A credible leader is flexible and understanding. They are the ones that the followers will come talk to when something happens in their personal life or in the office that requires assistance. As long at the justification is reasonable, the leader’s ability to be flexible, fair and understanding will build credibility with the followers. Adaptive leadership will inspire and motivate the followers to perform when called upon knowing that the leadership put the follower first above all else (Heitzman, 2015).

Showing empathy and compassion to your employees can prevent burnout and fatigue. A credible leader puts their followers first and in return they build credibility with the followers. Credible leaders take care of their employees even it means pushing back on a deadline or doing the task themselves (“Small Business Leadership”, 2016).

A credible leader is honest, displays confidence, takes calculated risks, makes timely decisions and is adaptive to the needs of their followers. A credible leader will find an effective balance between the traits and over time earn credibility with their leadership, peers and followers through their actions and decisions. A credible leader uses their leadership traits to motivate and inspire their followers to achieve the mission and vision of the organization.

Credible Leadership Skills

This research study addressed three questions related to credible leadership:

- How much importance does PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS leadership place on the individual traits and skills that constitute credible leadership?
- To what extent does the PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS leadership practice the traits and skills they have identified as important?
- What actions can be taken to improve the practice of important credible leadership skills and traits?

Competent

A credible leader must be competent by having the capability and experience to be effective. They have to know what they are doing, set goals that are realistic and know the required steps in order to achieve the goals. A credible leader knows their strengths and weaknesses. They continue to develop and work on their weaknesses. They know when to call on another resource that might be better suited to lead or support an effort. They know their limitations and when to make that phone call or request the support from someone in their network (Kouzes & Posner, 2011).

Credible leaders have a strong sense of themselves and know how they appear to others. They ask for feedback on their performance and continually work at developing their skill sets.

They know that the goals of the organization must be fulfilled and they are not afraid to take assertive action to ensure that the organization succeeds and they get what they want (“10 Traits”, 2012).

Planner

A credible leader is a visionary and forward looking. They have a sense of direction and know how to motivate the team towards a prosperous future. Their vision inspires and drives action among the followers. A credible leader develops an affirmed shared values among the organization and the followers through thoughtful planning and actions. The followers have to believe in what they are doing and that is baselined by establishing a plan that is in line with the values of the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2011).

A leader’s vision must be clear and in alignment with the values of the organization. A credible leader believes in teamwork and helps people reach their goals through strategic planning. They take pride in the accomplishments of the organization’s vision and the success of the individuals that they develop in the process (Gleeson, 2016).

Interpersonal

A credible leader takes the time to get to know their team on a personal level. They learn about their followers values, build trust and learn what motivates them. The first step of the process is to listen to your followers by walking the halls and communicating with them whenever possible. Show that you care. A credible leader will also promote them to express their opinions even if it is contrary to their own point of view. By being available and sharing personal experiences with their followers, credible leaders make connections and show their appreciation (Kouzes & Posner, 2011).

A credible leader is inspiring and sustains hope for their followers. They uplift spirits and provide a positive outlook for the future. They offer a can-do approach that is often needed during uncertain times. A credible leader's battle cry is to "Keep hope alive". However, when times are tough, a credible leader shares in the suffering. They accept responsibility and take charge of the situation. They are positive and unleash passion (Kouzes & Posner, 2011, p. 155).

A credible leader has passion, provides respect and has a sense of humor. They love what they do and are enthusiastic. Their enthusiasm is contagious and motivates followers to reach their full potential. They treat their leadership, peers and followers with respect and earn it in return. Their followers feel like partners involved in a similar cause, which drives performance and builds credibility. A credible leader has a sense of humor. They are not a stand-up comedian, but they do encourage laughter and joking around the office to boost morale and improve relationships. Credible leaders possess the interpersonal skills that motivate people to want to work for them and to seek to be part of their team ("Small Business Leadership, 2016).

Communicator

A credible leader communicates well. They are able to communicate their ideas in writing and through verbal communication. They can clearly provide command intent, but refrain from providing solutions so that their followers have the opportunity and maneuver space to find solutions to complex problems. They are also able to adjust their message to the particular audience to ensure effectiveness and efficiency ("Effective Leaders", 2015).

A credible leader knows that it is important to be have open and honest communication. They keep their followers in the loop and are willing to talk about issues on an organization and individual level. There frequent communication allows them to ensure things are running smoothly in the organization without having to ask for updates from the followers. They are

willing to delegate responsibility, which communicates their trust and respect for their employees to know when to act and when to roll things up to their attention (Heitzman, 2015).

Emotionally Intelligent

A credible leader knows that they must remain calm, regardless of the level of conflict. Their mantra is “When you lose your temper, you lose.”. They know that self-control is something that should be nurtured and grown. They know their priorities and have the courage to politely tell someone no, because they know that business isn’t personal (Roach, 2016, p. 2).

A credible leader knows who their detractors are that will challenge their authority and abilities. It is their strength of character that enables them to ignore the detractors and show leadership strength. They know how to control their emotions and not let the detractors deter them from achieving organizational success and leadership effectiveness (Root III, 2016).

Finally, credible leaders are humble. They are down to earth and are very approachable. Their followers are comfortable around the leader and not afraid to approach the leadership when a problem arises. They know that the credible leader will not overreact to bad news and will remain positive in finding a potential solution or path forward. They know they are not the brightest shining star out there and recognize that the people around them are the reason for their success (“10 Traits”, 2012).

Credible Leadership Summary

Credible leaders are honest, confident, risk-takers, decisive, and adaptive. They know how to strike a right balance between these traits in order to drive effective performance. They are very well respected in their organizations because of the leadership effectiveness that they bring to the organization. Followers gravitate towards them and their organizations because they are competent, know how to plan, are very interpersonal, communicate well and emotionally

intelligent. Credible leaders possess traits and skills that influence morale and inspire positive actions that lead to organizational performance.

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology

This chapter highlights the research methodology utilized to define the traits and skills of credible leadership and the process at which data will be collected through focused-group interviews.

Research Perspective

This qualitative research study is focused on the acquisition leadership within PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS and makes the assumption that credibility of the PEO leadership can be assessed through the vantage point of the PM and PD that reside within the PEOs. However, there are other direct functional support functions within the PEO that have not been accounted for in this study, such as Engineering, Logistics, Business Management, and Contract management to name a few. They too have an opinion on the credibility of the leadership as well as the traits and skills that they possess.

Despite this shortcoming, the success of the PEO is largely dependent on the success of the portfolio and programs that are managed by the PMs and PDs are in charge of said programs. However, this does not minimize the significant contributions that the functional teams provide to the PEO and to the PMs to make that success possible. Given the limitations of only being able to interview up to 9 participants, the decision was made to only interview a sample of PMs/PDs in order to gain an efficient and effective understanding of the importance and practice of credible leadership within PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS.

Research Design

In this study, the Grounded Theory Design was utilized to capture interview data to develop themes of information based on the experience of the interviewees. Grounded Theory design is a

systematic and qualitative procedure utilized to create general themes or views of the participants which results in grounded theory (Creswell, 2015).

Conceptual Model

As you can see in Figure 1 below, the conceptual model highlights that the presence of credible traits and skills define credible leadership, which eventually leads to leadership effectiveness. The credible traits are defined as Honesty, Confidence, Risk-Taking, Decisive, and Adaptive. The credible skills are defined as Competent, Planner, Interpersonal, Communicator, and Emotionally Intelligent. The high alignment of credible traits and skills within the PEO leadership can result in leadership effectiveness and will be further evaluated in this research study.

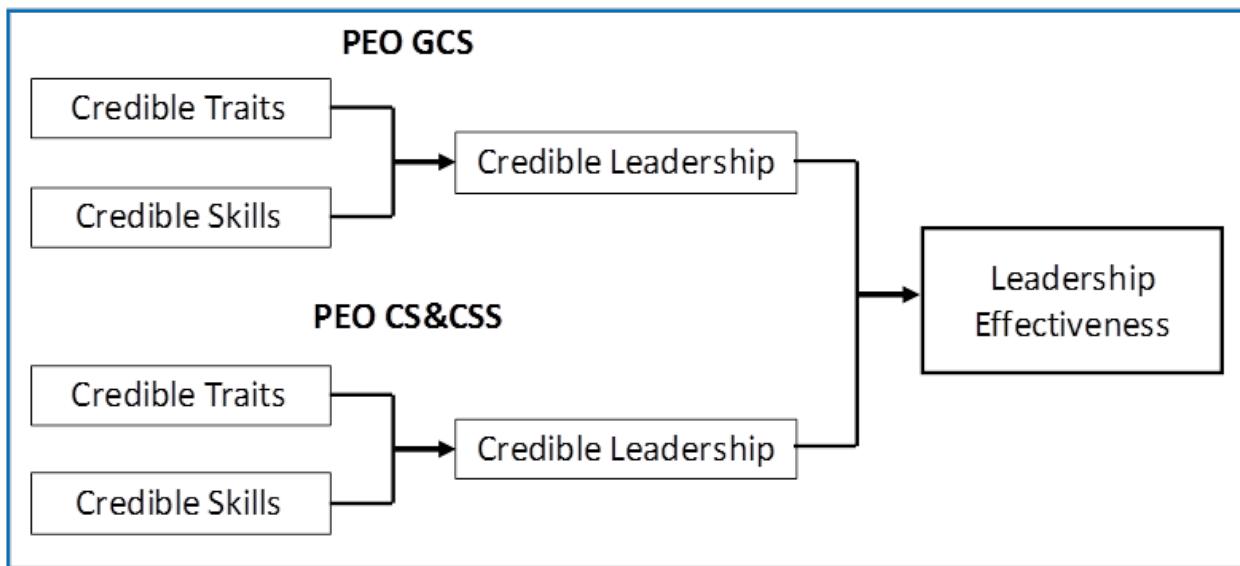


Figure 2: Conceptual Model of Credible Leadership

Data Collection Process

To gain an assessment of the importance and practice of the traits and skills that define credible leadership, an interview questionnaire was created. The interview questionnaire consists of three demographic questions, four open-ended questions and twenty Likert scale questions that align to each credible trait and skill defined in the literature review. The questionnaire was

provided to each of the eight participant in advance of a one hour face to face or phone call interview. A total of six face to face interviews were conducted and two phone call interviews.

A face to face interview was the preferred method to ensure that confidence in the responses through verbal and non-verbal communication. A decision was made to not record the interviews in order to provide an environment where the participants felt comfortable providing honest and open feedback on all responses considering that they were asked to assess their leadership. Although face to face was the preferred method, scheduling conflicts between the researcher and the participants required that two interviews be conducted over the phone. It was not observed that the phone interview presented any challenges or difficulties in gaining an accurate assessment of the participant's responses. The researcher was very happy with the willingness of the participation and the overall candidness of the participant's responses.

Data Collection

Three demographic questions were asked to gain an understanding of the acquisition experience that each participant possessed and how that related to their responses. Four open-ended questions were asked. The first three open-ended questions were utilized to gain an understanding of how their leadership is viewed from the vantage point of their external stakeholders. The final open-ended question provided the participant an opportunity to provide any additional information that they would like to provide in regards to the topic of credible leadership. Twenty Likert scale questions were asked to gain an understanding of the importance and practice of the traits and skills that the literature review defines as critical to credible leadership.

Interview Questionnaire

The interview guide for this study has been reviewed and approved by the Lawrence Technological University (LTU) Internal Review Board (IRB) and the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) Senior Service College Fellowship (SSCF) advisory board. The interview questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

Thematic Analysis

The literature review provides a framework to define credible leadership in terms of skills and traits that a leader must possess and practice to build credibility throughout their career in order to be effective. The thematic analysis of the participant's responses to each of the traits and skills provides a baseline assessment to the themes and interpretation of the importance and practice of credible leadership within PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS. This assessment is subjective to the inference of the researcher, but will provide a framework of understanding of credible leadership, which can be reviewed and acted upon in the future.

Chapter 4 – Findings

This chapter presents the findings from the focused-group interviews on the importance and practice of credible leadership. The findings provide insight and understanding of the importance and practice of credible leadership within PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS.

Demographics Responses

A total of eight PMs and PDs were interviewed for this study. Four PM/PDs from PEO GCS and four from CS&CSS. Six of the interviews were conducted face to face, and two over the phone. The demographic experience of the participants is summarized in Table 3:

Table 3. Demographic Experience of Participants

	Participant							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Years of Experience at Current PEO	4-6 years	4-6 years	6+ years	< 1 year	< 1 year	6+ years	< 1 year	6 + years
Years of Experience at other PEO(s)	5-6 years	2 years	3 years	3 years	2 years	0 years	2 years	6 years
Total Years of Acquisition Experience	8+ years	8+ years	8+ years	8+ years	8+ years	8+ years	8+ years	8+ years

As shown, three PMs and PDs are new to their respective PEO, and five have worked within their current PEO for at least four years. Three of the PM/PDs are new to their respective organizations and possess less than one year of experience within their current PEO. Four of the PM/PDs possess more than seven years of total PEO experience and four possess less than seven years. The total years of acquisition experience of the participants exceeded eight years for all participants. This is not surprising because a candidate requires substantial acquisition experience to be considered for a PEO position.

Open-Ended Responses

In question four, the participants were asked to provide an overall assessment of their leadership's credibility. In question five and six, the participants were asked to assess the credibility and effectiveness of their leadership from the lens of their external stakeholders. PEO external stakeholders include, but are not limited to, the Department of the Army (DA) staff, Contractors, other PEOs, other PM/PDs, Army Materiel Command (AMC), Life Cycle Materiel Commands (LCMCs) and other Services. Shown in Table 4, 5 and 6 are the paraphrased comments that was provided by the participants. The examples were paraphrased to ensure anonymity of the participants.

Table 4. Overall Assessment of Leadership Credibility

Question # 4	What is your overall assessment of your current Leadership's credibility? Do they say what they will do? Can you provide examples?
Comments and Feedback	=5:5- In general, you don't get to those leadership positions without being a credible leader, so yes they are credible. When they make commitments, they have a history of following through on meeting them. - They are certainly competent, but credibility is highly discounted as there are a few examples where they did not do what they said they would do. - They are very smart and knowledgeable in acquisition, but they are reluctant to delegate decision authority, which decreases their credibility. - Very credible. Candor, charisma and familiarity with subordinate improves morale and inspires people in the organization. They also get bonus points for knowing my program very well. - Yes, they put the soldier first in everything they do. They ensure that the Followers know that the soldier is our customer and everything we do is to support them. Their focus builds credibility. - Yes. They do what they say they will do. I can't think of a time that they didn't. - Yes. They do what they say they are going to do, but they do not take action to inspire their organization. - Yes. They are credible. They are very focused on tying funding to requirements. They follow through on the actions that they say are important.

As shown in Table 4, participants believe that their leadership's is credible. They follow through on the actions they say are important and they do what they say they are going to do.

Table 5. External Stakeholder Viewpoint of Leadership Credibility

Question # 5	Is your leadership viewed as CREDIBLE by external stakeholders? Can you provide any examples?
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In my opinion, he is viewed as the most credible PEO in all of ASA(ALT). Often call him to benchmark his processes in handling of the civilian appraisal and personnel systems. - Externally, no doubt. Internally, there are a few examples that don't sit well with the Followers. - Yes, they are very transparent with issues, which builds credibility with the stakeholders. - Yes, they do what they say they will do and the stakeholders know that. - Yes 100%, often called on by his peers for his opinion in senior leader meetings, which shows that they deem him credible. - Yes. Has a very in depth analytics underpinning. - Yes. Very respected in the Pentagon. Looks for PM to provide accurate information to him and he has no issue pushing it forward. - Yes. You see it when he interacts with the user community and they are willing to make cost versus performance requirements trades based on his credible feedback.

As shown in Table 5, the participants were asked if they believe that their leadership is credible from the viewpoint of their external stakeholders. Typical external stakeholders for the PEOs would include the senior leaders that reside in the Department of the Army's functional areas such as Acquisition, Manpower, Intelligence, Operations, Logistics, Plans, Signals, Training, Finance, or Requirements. Each PEO has different stakeholders in each of the functional areas and their level of interaction could vary from PEO to PEO based on where each of their products fall within the Army acquisition lifecycle.

All eight participants believed that leadership was viewed as credible by their respective external stakeholders. This reinforced their viewpoint from question 4 that the leadership was credible. These two perceptions could be inter-related from the PM or PDs perspective since they often need their leadership to engage with external stakeholders on their behalf. However, one participant did note that followers did not see the leadership as credible based on some internal PEO actions.

Table 6. External Stakeholder Viewpoint of Leadership Effectiveness

Question # 6	Is your leadership viewed as EFFECTIVE by external stakeholders? Can you provide any examples?
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes. Best PEO out there right now. Army senior leaders lean on him as the subject matter expert for his portfolio and use his recommendations and feedback to make high level decisions. - Not sure. Don't have enough experience as of yet seeing them interact with their stakeholders. - Yes. Very well respected and deemed effective externally. However, internally, delays in decisions have caused some to see it otherwise. - Yes. Effectiveness leads to credibility. - Depends on the lens that you are looking through. The users would say that the Leadership does not care about schedule, but others see them as very effective. - Overcoming my programs past will take time to build credibility with the external stakeholders, but they do view the leadership as effective. Overcoming the Office of the Secretary of Defense staff skepticism will take time. - Yes. Our Leadership was asked by Army senior leadership to take over a program, despite it being in sustainment because they have confidence that our Leadership would deliver as expected.

As shown in Table 6, seven of the participants said that their leadership was effective from the viewpoint of the external stakeholders. One PM/PD said that they were not sure because they didn't have enough experience seeing them interact with those stakeholders.

Likert Scale Responses

Questions 7 through 26 are Likert scale questions, which address the credible leadership traits (Honest, Confident, Risk-Taker, Decisive, and Adaptive) and skills (Competent, Planner, Interpersonal, Communicator, and Emotionally Intelligent). The odd numbered questions relate to the importance of the trait or skill, and the even number question relate to the practice of the same trait or skill.

The results shown below are the distributions of the responses for all eight participants and the difference in responses of those PMs/PDs with seven or more years of PEO experience versus those with less than seven years of experience. The split was exactly four PMs/PDs with seven or more years of PEO experience and four with less than seven years. This breakout process is being utilized to determine if the amount of PEO experience has an influence on the responses provided in the interview questionnaire.

Table 7. Importance of Honest Trait

Question # 7	What Importance does your leadership place on establishing trust with you?					
Likert Scale	Very Important (5)	Important (4)	Moderately Important (3)	Slightly Important (2)	Not Important (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	3	3	2			4.13
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	1	2	1			4.00
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2	1	1			4.25
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - States that it is important, but not necessarily in their actions. - No overt actions to go out of their way to stress the importance. - More that you lose it, not gain it. - As a leader, our previous reputation precedes us, so not stressed. 					

As shown in Table 7, six of eight participants said their Leadership believes that establishing trust is important or very important. Establishing trust is inferred to be related to the honest trait and a significant factor in building leadership credibility. PEO experience did not have a significant impact in the Participant's assessment.

Table 8. Practice of Honest Trait

Question # 8	According to your followers, how often does your leadership make decisions that are in the best interest of the organization?					
Likert Scale	Almost Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	3	4		1		4.13
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	1	2		1		3.75
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2	2				4.50
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the best civilian pay pool managers (often called for assistance). - Viewpoint of leadership is better than most that I've seen. - Somewhat too involved in the decision process (too much prep). - Takes a realistic approach to the concept of commonality. - It certainly is considered in their decisions, but not the determining criteria. 					

As shown in Table 8, seven of eight participants said their leadership makes decisions in the best interest of the organization always or often one seldom. Making decisions in the best interest of the organization is often related to integrity, which is inferred to fall underneath the

honest trait. From a practice standpoint, the participants with less than seven years of PEO experience rated their leadership higher than those with more than seven years of PEO experience.

Table 9. Honest Trait – Importance vs. Practice



As shown in Table 9, the importance and practice of the honest trait correlated very well within the PEOs. However, there were 2 responses that suggested that it was moderately important to leadership and one participant said that it was seldom practiced. Given that there were only eight participants interviewed for this study, a single response represents 12.5% of the population, which could be a significant amount of a larger population. Therefore, the research suggests that further analysis should be conducted on the honest trait to gain a better understanding and improve the statistical confidence of the results.

Table 10. Importance of Confident Trait

Question # 9	What importance does your leadership place on displaying confidence in your decisions, actions and strategy?					
Likert Scale	Very Important (5)	Important (4)	Moderately Important (3)	Slightly Important (2)	Not Important (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	3	3	1	1		4.00
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)		3	1			3.75
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	3			1		4.25
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stress importance through actions and briefings. - Leadership is good at assessing the confidence we portray in our presentation. - Once briefed, they carry the message forward and own it (credibility increase) - Often ignores PM/PD recommendations without explanation, which results in a decrease in PM/PD credibility with stakeholders and followers. 					

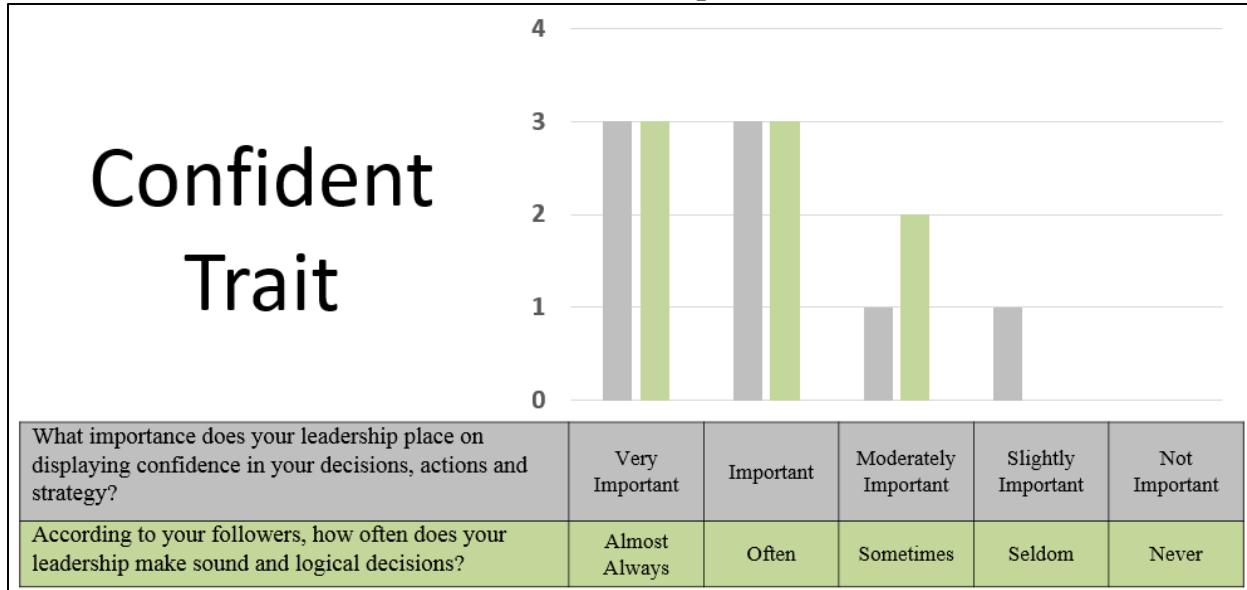
As shown in Table 10, six of eight participants said their leadership thought it was important or very important to be confident in their decisions, action and strategy. However, the participants with less than seven years of PEO experience said was very important and those with more than seven years of PEO experience said that it was important.

Table 11. Practice of Confident Trait

Question # 10	According to your followers, how often does your leadership make sound and logical decisions?					
Likert Scale	Almost Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	3	3	2			4.13
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2	1	1			4.25
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	1	2	1			4.00
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They may second guess them at times, but balance the time available to make the decision and what information is available at the time. - The followers question personnel decisions more than programmatic decisions. - Every once in a while, they question excessively and prepare too much. 					

As shown in Table 11, six of eight participants said the leadership often or almost always made sound and logical decisions. The research suggests that making sound and logical decisions

is a significant characteristic of the confident trait. There is little difference in the ratings of between those with more or less than seven years of PEO experience.

Table 12. Confident Trait – Importance vs. Practice

As shown in Table 12, the importance and practice of the confident trait correlated very well within the PEOs. However, there was one response that it was only slightly important to leadership. Given a limited sample of eight participants, the research suggests that further analysis should be conducted on the confident trait to gain a better understanding and improve the statistical confidence of the results.

Table 13. Importance of Risk-Taker Trait

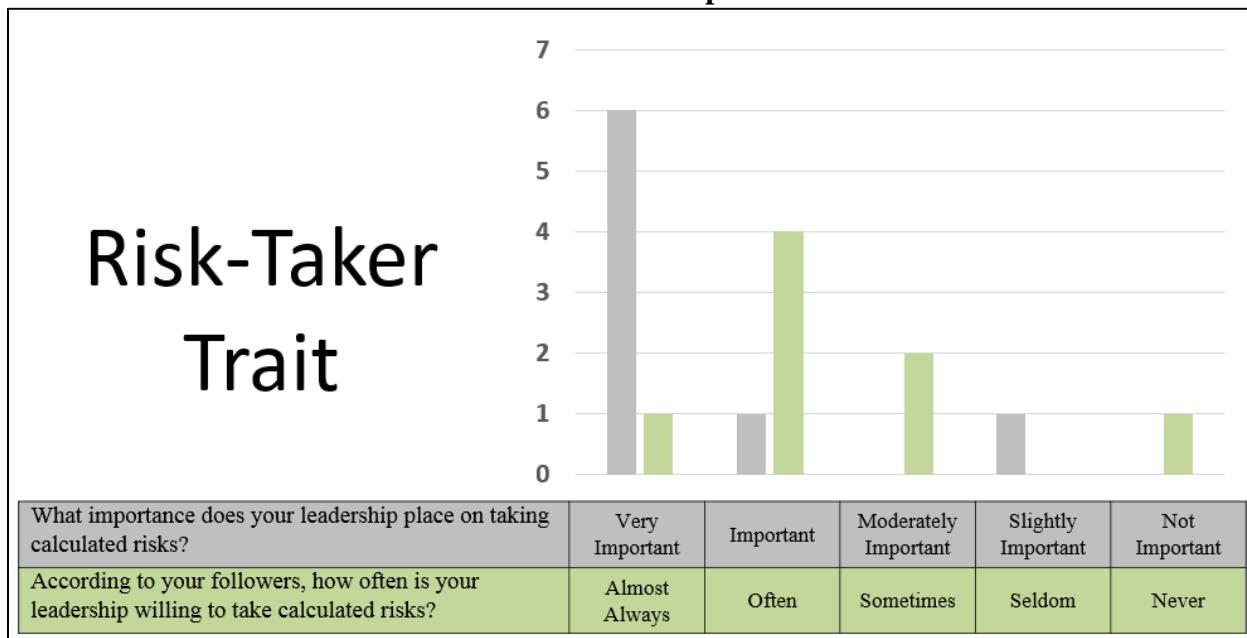
Question # 11	What importance does your leadership place on taking calculated risks?					
Likert Scale	Very Important (5)	Important (4)	Moderately Important (3)	Slightly Important (2)	Not Important (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	6	1		1		4.50
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	3	1				4.75
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	3			1		4.25
Comments and Feedback	- Stresses the importance of documenting what the risks and impacts are, then they carry that message forward to the Army leadership. - Unwilling to delegate decision authority or listen to recommendations.					

As shown in Table 13, six of eight participants said that their leadership viewed taking calculated risks as very important. In contrast, one participant said that it was only slightly important to leadership. The participants PEO experience does not seem to have much of an impact on their assessments of the practice of the Risk-Taker trait.

Table 14. Practice of Risk-Taker Trait

Question # 12	According to your followers, how often is your leadership willing to take calculated risks?					
Likert Scale	Almost Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	1	4	2		1	3.50
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)		2	2			3.50
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	1	2			1	3.50
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Army leadership is always applying pressure to do things faster and more efficiently. Our leadership follows orders, but ensures that risks are known. - Stresses that all risks have to be calculated and prioritized. - Delays decisions long enough that risks become issues. 					

As shown in Table 14, five of eight participants said that their leadership is willing to take calculated risks often or almost always. Although the leadership stresses it as very important, they do not practice it as much. The participants with less than seven years of PEO experience had a wider range of responses than those with more than seven years. Although it was not discussed in the interview, there could be a correlation in the ratings to the amount of authority that is delegated to those with less PEO experience versus those with more.

Table 15. Risk Taker Trait – Importance vs. Practice

As shown in Table 15, the importance and practice of the risk-taker trait did not correlate very well within the PEOs. Six participants said that taking calculated risks was very important to their leadership, but only one participant said it was almost always practiced. In addition, four participants said that leadership was willing to take calculated risks often. There were also three responses that said it was moderately important or not important at all. Three responses represents 37.5% of the responses. Given a limited sample of eight participants, the research suggests that further analysis should be conducted on the risk-taker trait to gain a better understanding and improve the statistical confidence of the results.

Table 16. Importance of Decisive Trait

Question # 13	What importance does your leadership place on making timely decisions?					
Likert Scale	Very Important (5)	Important (4)	Moderately Important (3)	Slightly Important (2)	Not Important (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	2	2	2	2		3.50
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)		1	2	1		3.00
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2	1		1		4.00
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PEO/PM yes, Army leadership no. Too much bureaucracy. - Stresses the importance of strategically balancing when a decision needs to be made vs. the timing of information availability to better inform the decision. - Stresses importance to backwards plan from contract award dates. - Can't use the "silver bullet" every time, so strategically engages. 					

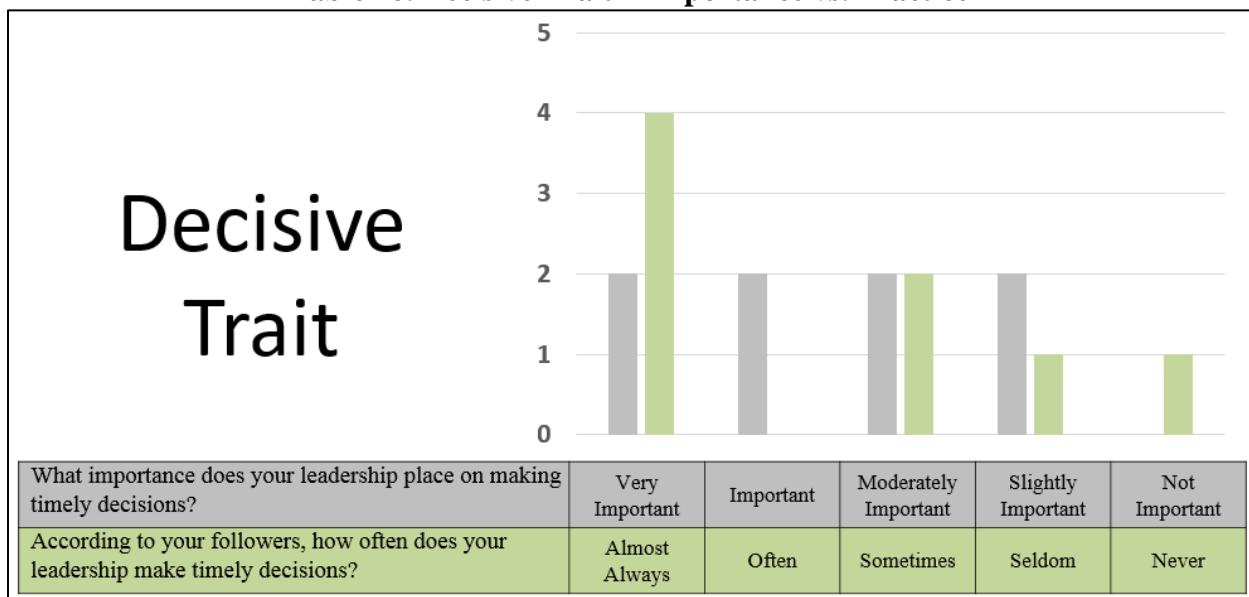
As shown in Table 16, four of eight participants said that their leadership views making timely decisions as very important or important. However, four of the participants said that their leadership views it as moderately to slightly important. The participants with more than seven years of PEO experience had a smaller range of importance than those with less.

Table 17. Practice of Decisive Trait

Question # 14	According to your followers, how often does your leadership make timely decisions?					
Likert Scale	Almost Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	4		2	1	1	3.63
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	1		2	1		3.25
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	3				1	4.00
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GCS spends more time on programmatic decisions, whereas CS&CSS spends more time on personnel decisions (Internal Operating Budget). - Documentation and decisions through the PEO are quick, but final authorization usually resides with Army senior leadership. - Leadership has stated "it's never too late to make the right decision" and is acceptable with hearing a decision briefing several times. - Does not let funding and schedule drive decisions, yet PM/PD responsible for execution of funds and delivering capability. - Waits until comfortable making decision and always wants more information, which is often too late. 					

As shown in Table 17, four out of eight participants said that their leadership almost always makes timely decisions. Similar to question 13 which asked about the importance of making timely decisions, in question 14, those with less than seven years of PEO experience said that their leadership makes more timely decisions than those with more PEO experience. Although it did not come up in the discussion, PEO experience could play a factor in their expectation of a timely decision. Perhaps more experience lends itself to having higher expectations.

Table 18. Decisive Trait – Importance vs. Practice



As shown in Table 18, the importance and practice of the decisive trait seemed to have varying results within the PEOs. Four participants said that taking calculated risks was very important or important to their leadership and four said it was almost always practiced. In contrast, four participants said that the importance and practice of the decisive trait was moderately or slightly important and practiced sometimes at best. Four participants represents 50% of the responses. Given a limited sample of eight participants, the research suggests that further analysis should be conducted on the decisive trait to gain a better understanding and improve the statistical confidence of the results.

Table 19. Importance of Adaptive Trait

Question # 15	What importance does your leadership place on being adaptable and flexible?					
Likert Scale	Very Important (5)	Important (4)	Moderately Important (3)	Slightly Important (2)	Not Important (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	6		2			4.50
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	3		1			4.50
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	3		1			4.50
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership willing to challenge the status quo, when it makes sense. - Chartered to be flexible and adaptable in navigating through statutory and regulatory policy. - Stresses importance of providing and vetting out multiple courses of action to provide leadership with options and decision maneuver space. - Stresses importance of finding a way around the bureaucracy. - Focused too much on doing exactly what the boss asked for versus thinking about alternative courses of action. 					

As shown in Table 19, six of eight participants said that their leadership views being adaptable and flexible as very important. There was no difference in responses between those with more PEO experience versus less.

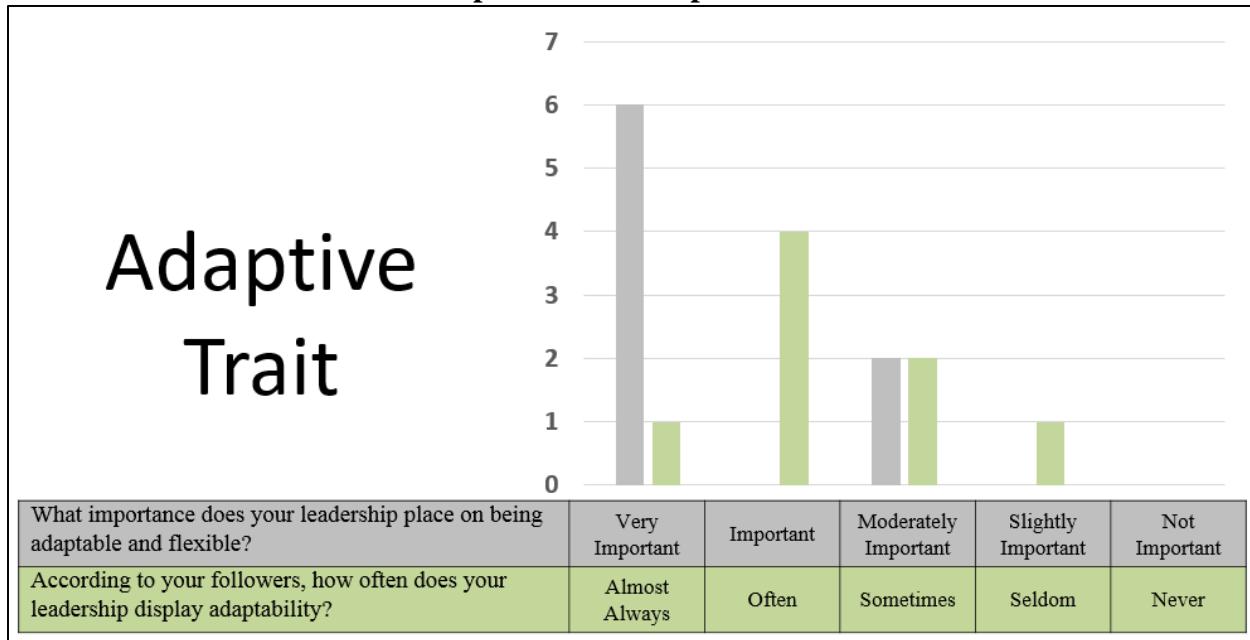
Table 20. Practice of Adaptive Trait

Question # 16	According to your followers, how often does your leadership display adaptability?					
Likert Scale	Almost Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	1	4	2	1		3.63
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)		2	1	1		3.25
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	1	2	1			4.00
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is very flexible. Willing to change a decision, if new information becomes available and there is still time to change course. - We don't always provide leadership with what they ask for, but always give them something that meets their intent and that is acceptable. - Zero flexibility. 					

As shown in Table 20, five of eight participants said that their leadership almost always or often displays adaptability. Despite is being a very important trait, it seems that it isn't exactly

practice as much as it is stressed. The participants with less than seven years of PEO experience, rated the practice higher than those with more.

Table 21. Adaptive Trait – Importance vs. Practice



As shown in Table 21, the importance and practice of the adaptive trait does not seem to correlate well within the PEOs. Six participants said that being adaptable and flexible was very important to their leadership, but only one participant said that it was almost always practiced. Two of the participants said that the adaptive trait was moderately important and sometimes practiced. The results suggest that there is a big difference in the importance and practice of the adaptive trait within the PEOs. Given a limited sample of eight participants, the research suggests that further analysis should be conducted on the adaptive trait to gain a better understanding and improve the statistical confidence of the results.

Table 22. Importance of Competent Skill

Question # 17	What importance does your leadership place on professional development?					
Likert Scale	Very Important (5)	Important (4)	Moderately Important (3)	Slightly Important (2)	Not Important (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	6	2				4.75
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	3	1				4.75
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	3	1				4.75
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Has not denied anyone training that was requested and reasonable. - Recognizes the importance and sends people to long term training often. - Stresses importance of people first, mission second. - Stresses black/green belt training and conducts Officer Professional Development (OPD) sessions every month. 					

As shown in Table 22, six of eight participants said that their leadership views professional development as very important. Professional development is inferred to have a significant impact on the Competency of senior leaders and therefore is an important characteristic of the competent skill. Those with more than seven years of PEO experience rated it the same as those with less PEO experience.

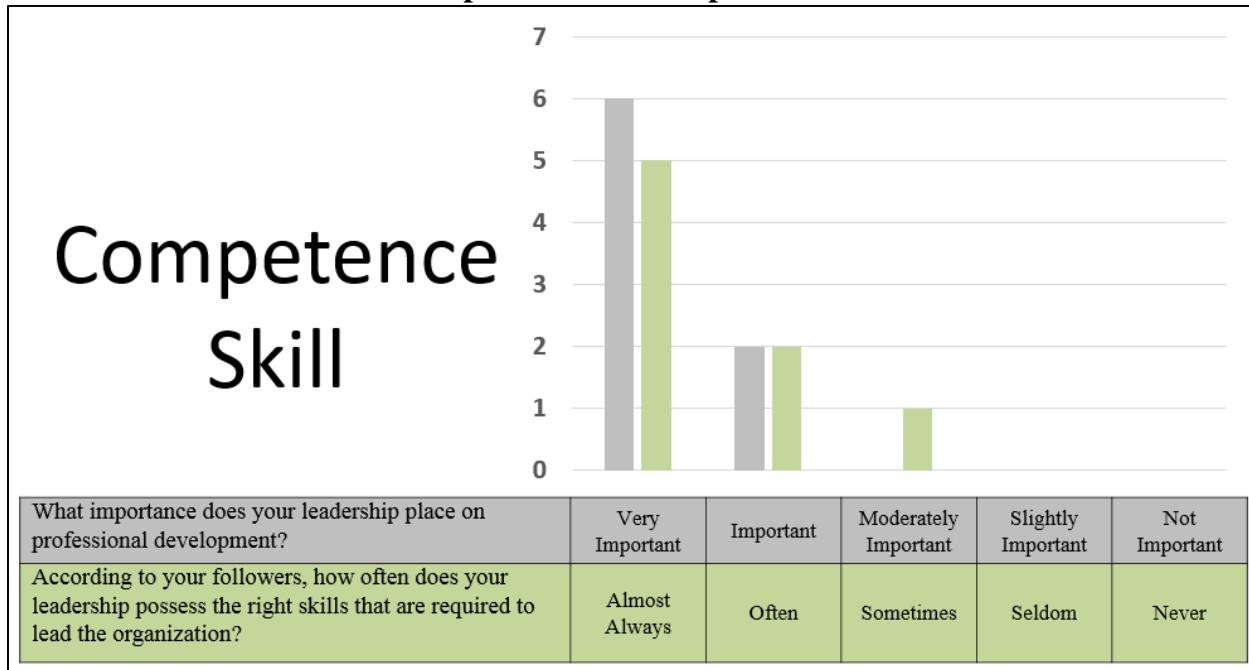
Table 23. Practice of Competent Skill

Question # 18	According to your followers, how often does your leadership possess the right skills that are required to lead the organization?					
Likert Scale	Almost Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	5	2	1			4.50
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	3		1			4.50
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2	2				4.50
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generally seeking too much information and delaying decisions. 					

As shown in Table 23, seven of eight participants said that their leadership almost always or often possesses the right skills that are required to lead the organization. Leaders who have the right skills for all of the situations they encounter is inferred to play a big part in the competent

skill practice. The level of PEO experience doesn't seem to play much of a factor in the viewpoint of the leadership's practice of their skills.

Table 24. Competence Skill – Importance vs. Practice



As shown in Table 24, the importance and practice of the competence skill correlated very well within the PEOs. All eight participants said that professional development was very important or important to their leadership and seven participants said that their leadership almost always or often possessed the required skills necessary to lead the organization. In contrast, one participant said that their leadership sometimes possessed the skills required to lead the organization. Given that there were only eight participants interviewed for this study, a single response represents 12.5% of the population, which could be a significant amount of a larger population. Therefore, the research suggests that further analysis should be conducted on the competence skill to gain a better understanding and improve the statistical confidence of the results.

Table 25. Importance of Planner Skill

Question # 19	What importance does your leadership place on aligning program actions with the PEO vision and mission?					
Likert Scale	Very Important (5)	Important (4)	Moderately Important (3)	Slightly Important (2)	Not Important (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	4	4				4.50
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2	2				4.50
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2	2				4.50
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good alignment with actions to vision/mission. - Stresses requirements trace for all programs. - Leadership has talked about vision/mission once in two years. Not as frequent as you would think. - Stresses the importance of aligning our resources to the proper missions. 					

As shown in Table 25, eight of eight participants said that their leadership views the alignment of programs actions with the PEO vision and mission as very important and important. Alignment of the actions to the vision and mission infers that planning is an important credible leadership trait. The participants with seven years or more of PEO experience responded the same way as those with less PEO experience.

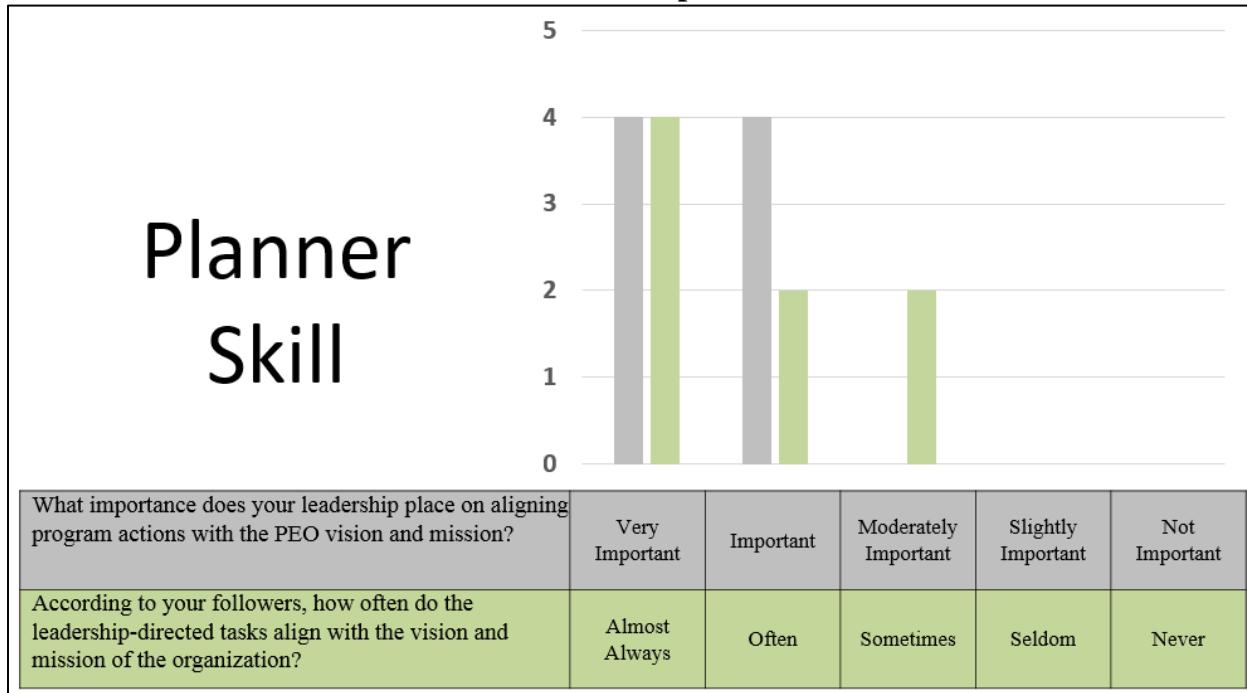
Table 26. Practice of Planner Skill

Question # 20	According to your followers, how often do the leadership-directed tasks align with the vision and mission of the organization?					
Likert Scale	Almost Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	4	2	2			4.25
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2	1	1			4.25
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2	1	1			4.25
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some of the leadership-directed tasks are out of their control. - Always asking for more information that delays execution and sometimes is not relevant to the mission. 					

As shown in Table 26, six of eight participants said that the leadership-directed tasks that they receive, often or almost always align with the vision and Mission of the organization.

Alignment of directed-tasks is inferred as being a credible planner skill. The participants with seven years or more of PEO experience responded the same way as those with less PEO experience.

Table 27. Planner Skill – Importance vs. Practice



As shown in Table 27, the importance and practice of the planner skill correlated well within the PEOs. All eight participants said that aligning program actions to the PEO vision and mission were very important or important to their leadership and six participants said that the leadership-directed tasks almost always or often aligned with the PEO vision and mission. In contrast, two participants said that their leadership sometimes aligned the tasks to the vision and mission. Given that there were only eight participants interviewed for this study, two responses represents 25% of the population, which could be a significant amount of a larger population. Therefore, the research suggests that further analysis should be conducted on the planner skill to gain a better understanding and improve the statistical confidence of the results.

Table 28. Importance of Interpersonal Skill

Question # 21	What importance does your Leadership place on interacting positively with the Followers of your organization?					
Likert Scale	Very Important (5)	Important (4)	Moderately Important (3)	Slightly Important (2)	Not Important (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	3	2	1	2		3.75
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	1	1	1	1		3.50
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2	1		1		4.00
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very approachable. - Does not stress importance, but suspect that it is a function of available time. - Stresses to overcommunicate to eliminate surprises and overreaction later on. - Important but not stressed. 					

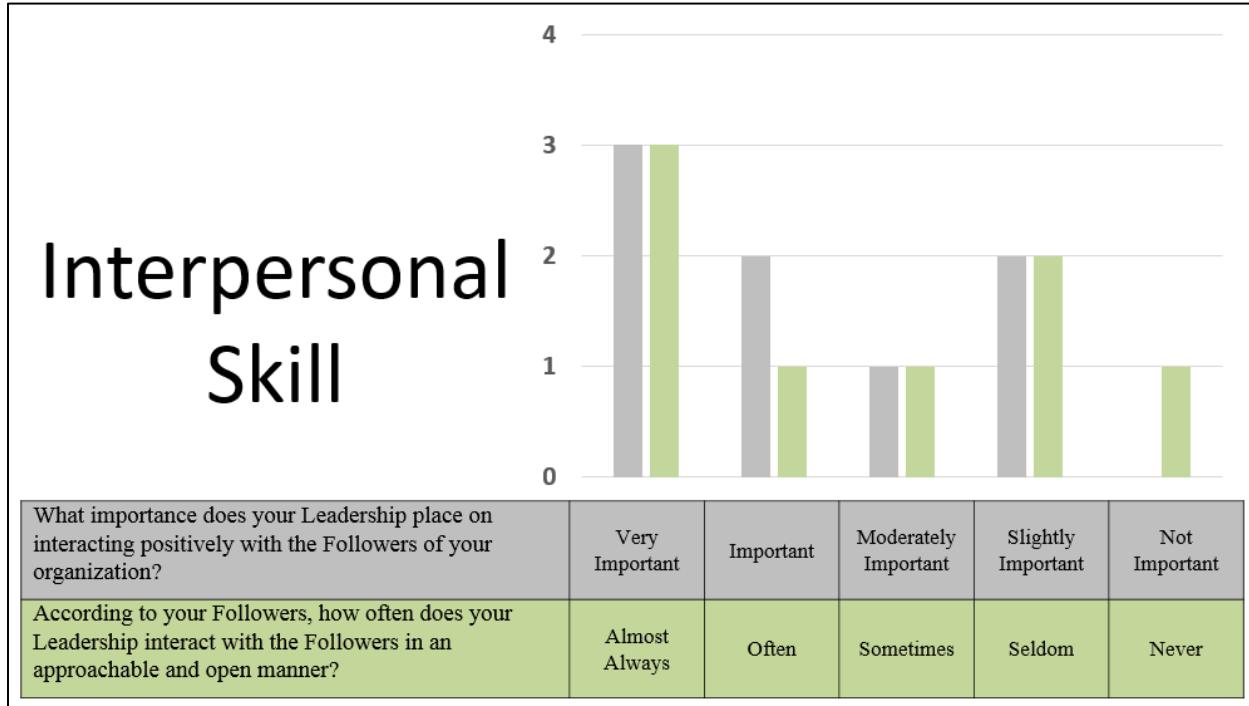
As shown in Table 28, five of eight participants said that their leadership views interacting positively with Followers as very important or important. Interacting positively is inferred as being a characteristic of interpersonal skill. The range of responses between those with seven years or more of PEO experience and those with less is very similar.

Table 29. Practice of Interpersonal Skill

Question # 22	According to your Followers, how often does your Leadership interact with the Followers in an approachable and open manner?					
Likert Scale	Almost Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	3	1	1	2	1	3.38
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	1	1	1		1	3.25
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2			2		3.50
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Followers can walk into their office any time. - When in the office, will make time, but travels a lot. - Gets along very well with Followers. - Open door policy means schedule an appointment on my calendar. - Decisions usually already made and not really looking for feedback. - Encourages it and has never once chastised lower level engagement. - Often ignores smaller PMs and that causes morale issues. 					

As you can see in Table 29, four of eight participants said that their leadership almost always or often interacts with their Followers in an approachable and open manner. The range of responses seem to vary significantly in the practice of this interpersonal skill set.

Table 30. Interpersonal Skill – Importance vs. Practice



As shown in Table 30, the importance and practice of the interpersonal skill correlated very well within the PEOs, but the responses varied significantly across the participants. Of all the traits and skills, the interpersonal skill was the one with the most variability in the responses. There was one participant that said that their leadership never interacted with their followers in an approachable and open manner. Given that there were only eight participants interviewed for this study, a single response represents 12.5% of the population, which could be a significant amount of a larger population. Therefore, the research suggests that further analysis should be conducted on the interpersonal skill to gain a better understanding and improve the statistical confidence of the results.

Table 31. Importance of Communicator Skill

Question # 23	What importance does your leadership place on effective communication?					
Likert Scale	Very Important (5)	Important (4)	Moderately Important (3)	Slightly Important (2)	Not Important (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	4	4				4.50
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2	2				4.50
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2	2				4.50
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very important to communicate the right message. - Stresses importance of keeping leadership in the loop to prevent surprises. - Important but not stressed. - Very important - almost too much emphasis. 					

As shown in Table 31, all eight participants said that their leadership views effective communication as either important or very important. There was no difference in the responses of those participants with seven or more years of PEO experience versus those with less.

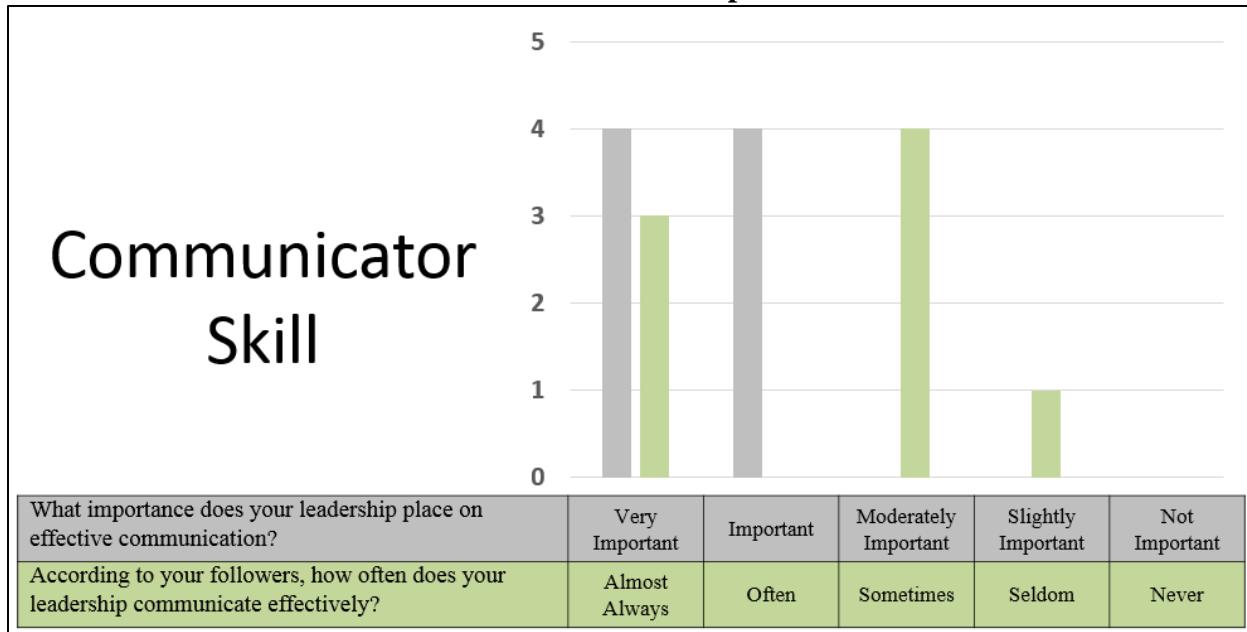
Table 32. Practice of Communicator Skill

Question # 24	According to your followers, how often does your leadership communicate effectively?					
Likert Scale	Almost Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	3		4	1		3.63
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	1		2	1		3.25
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	2		2			4.00
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not like to give negative feedback on the spot and that causes delays and miscommunication as the message is delivered later on through their staff. - Sometimes they overcommunicate (too many emails, townhalls, etc). - When things are going well, the followers rate them well. When not going well, they rate them bad. More a matter of the status than the leadership. 					

As shown in Table 32, only three of eight participants said that their leadership almost always practiced effective communication. Of all the traits and skills, communication seems to have the biggest discrepancy between what leadership views as important and what they practice.

There was not much difference in the responses between those with seven or more years of PEO experience and those with less.

Table 33. Communicator Skill – Importance vs. Practice



As shown in Table 33, the importance and practice of the communicator skill did not correlate well within the PEOs. All eight participants said that effective communication was very important or important to their leadership. However, only three participants said that their leadership almost always communicated effectively. Five of the participants said that their leadership sometimes or seldom communicated effectively. Given that there were only eight participants interviewed for this study, five responses represents 62.5% of the population, which is a significant amount of this population. Therefore, the research suggests that further analysis should be conducted on the communication skill to gain a better understanding and improve the statistical confidence of the results.

Table 34. Importance of Emotionally Intelligent Skill

Question # 25	What importance does your Leadership place on emotional awareness and control?					
Likert Scale	Very Important (5)	Important (4)	Moderately Important (3)	Slightly Important (2)	Not Important (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	3	3	2			4.13
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	1	3				4.25
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	1	1	2			3.75
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The mantra is "if you overcommunicate, I'll underreact". - Sometimes "fires for effect" to send a message. - If there was an issue, they would increase awareness, but not an issue. 					

As shown in Table 34, six of eight participants said that their leadership views emotional awareness and control as very important or important. The participants with more than seven years of PEO experience said that their leadership places more importance on emotional awareness and control than those with less PEO experience.

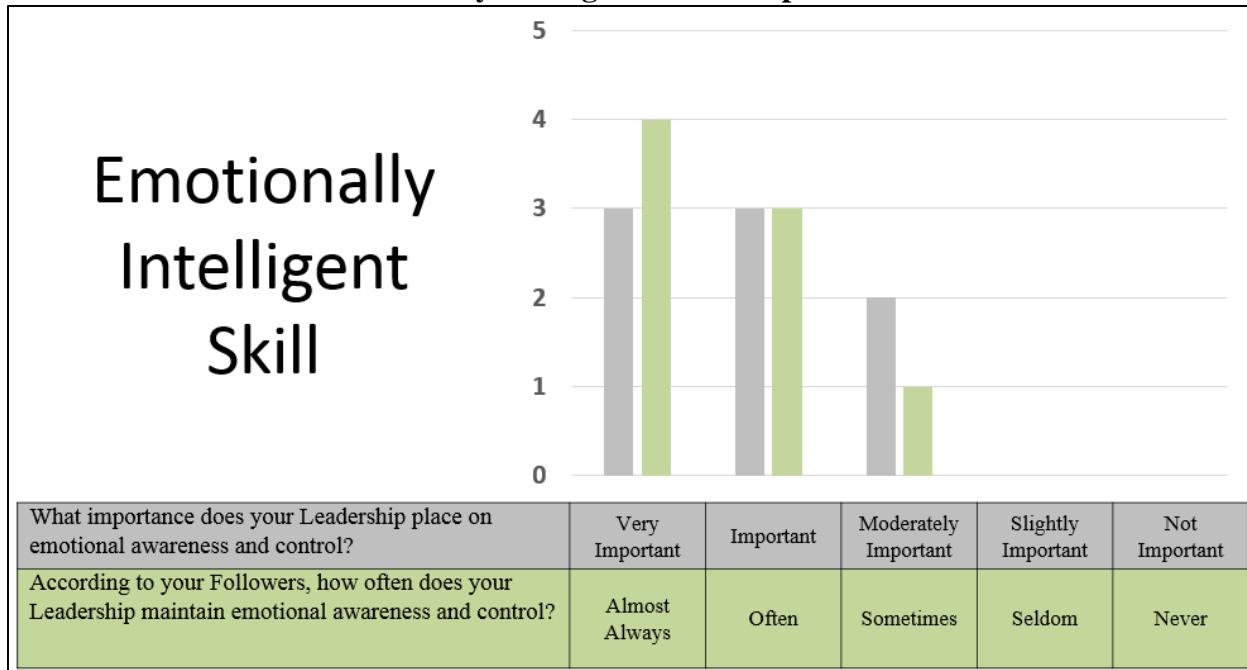
Table 35. Practice of Emotionally Intelligent Skill

Question # 26	According to your Followers, how often does your Leadership maintain emotional awareness and control?					
Likert Scale	Almost Always (5)	Often (4)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (2)	Never (1)	Average
All Participants (8)	4	3	1			4.38
7+ Yrs PEO Experience (4)	3	1				4.75
< 7 Yrs PEO Experience (4)	1	1	2			3.75
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs to consider audience and cut down on "locker room" talk. - Maintains emotional control to the point that no emotion is shown (often viewed as lacking trust in subordinates). - Sometimes manage through fear and sometimes show emotion, displeasure and anger. 					

As shown in Table 35, seven of eight participants said that their leadership almost always or often maintains emotional awareness and control. Similar to the importance of emotional

awareness and control, those participants with seven or more years of PEO experience said that their leadership practiced this skill more than those with less PEO experience.

Table 36. Emotionally Intelligent Skill – Importance vs. Practice



As shown in Table 36, the importance and practice of the emotionally intelligent skill correlated very well within the PEOs, but there was a slight variation in the responses. Six participants said that emotional awareness and control was very important or important to their leadership. Seven participants said that their leadership almost always or often maintained emotional awareness or control. However, one participant said that their leadership sometimes maintained emotional awareness and control, which could be a big deal given that there were only eight participants interviewed for this study. A single response represents 12.5% of the population, which could be a significant amount of a larger population. Therefore, the research suggests that further analysis should be conducted on the interpersonal skill to gain a better understanding and improve the statistical confidence of the results.

Open-Ended Final Responses

In question 27, the participants were asked to provide any additional feedback that they wanted to provide in terms of credible leadership. Listed below in Table 27 is the feedback that they provided. Almost all of the participants answered question 27 and they were very passionate about the topic in general.

Table 37. Credible Leadership Comments

Question # 27	Is there anything else you would like to add in regards to the topic of credible leadership?
Comments and Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If you take care of your people, the people will take care of the program and the leader. - I've learned as much from bad leadership as I have from good leadership. - Trust is # 1. If you haven't communicated with your leadership to the point where you have their trust and earn credibility, shame on you because when crisis arises it is too late. - As a leader, you have to expand your visibility upward and downward to build credibility. - Culture is very hard to change. Despite several personnel issues within my PM, the senior leadership did not engage with other senior leaders to expedite disciplinary action. The delay in action impacted morale significantly and in turn decreased their credibility from the viewpoint of the Followers. - There seems to be an issue with new people being accepted. I've seen this in multiple programs. It decreases morale and the credibility of the leadership, when not acted upon. - There is a perception of favoritism in some PEO hiring actions. One leader made a statement that all future senior level positions would be filled through a competitive hiring process, but less than a month later, two senior level positions were filled without competition. That reduced the leader's credibility from the Followers perspective. - The leadership is more than willing to share in the suffering. They certainly have the perspective that "we are all in this together". That goes a long way in earning credibility.

As shown in Table 37, several of the participants had some additional comments on leadership and credible leadership. One participant stated that by taking care of the people, the people will take care of the program and the leader. They went on to say that over time, by taking care of the people, that leader earns credibility with the followers and pays off for them in the long run.

One participant stated that they have learned as much from bad leadership as they have from good leadership and the end result is they now know what to do and what not to do. In turn this has helped them further refine their leadership style and know what to potential traits and skills to avoid that could decrease credibility with their followers.

One participant stated that trust is the # 1 trait and in a time of crisis, if you haven't developed trust with your leadership and earned their credibility, then shame on you, because it is too late at that point. The participant stressed the importance of going out of your way to develop the trust required, almost like you are earning points in a rewards program that can be cashed in later for a free stay at a hotel. They said that it is essential to have those points available when they need to be cashed in during a time of crisis and the accumulation of points was the process of earning credibility.

One participant stated that you have to expand your visibility upward and downward in the organization. By doing so, they said that you earn and build credibility with the leadership and the followers. They stated that they make a point to be visible and are not afraid of visibility turning into additional tasks from leadership, because they saw that as an opportunity rather than a burden. They stated that when they were visible to the followers by simply walking around the office, they learned a lot about the followers, what was important to them and often found out more about their program as a result. Ultimately, they stated that visibility enables the opportunities to build and earn credibility as a leader.

One participant stated that their leadership was more than willing to participate in the suffering. They meant that in hard times, their leadership didn't tell them to go figure it out, they pulled up their sleeves and asked how they could help. They stayed with them during the long hours and helped them by removing roadblocks and engaging wherever they thought they could assist. They stated that the leadership got a lot of praise from the followers and those actions increased their credibility from their viewpoint and the followers viewpoint.

One of the participants highlighted that there are some culture concerns at United States Army TACOM Life Cycle Management Command (LCMC) that are understandably difficult to

change, but the lack of leadership attention and action have adversely impacted morale and ultimately the leadership's credibility.

One participant stated that their followers, in two different programs at two different timeframes, had shown an unwillingness to accept new people into their organization. In both scenarios, both hiring actions were process with a competitive hiring process and still resulted in resentment from a few of the followers in the organization. They stated that the new people were challenged from day one, often had to earn their counterparts respect and building credibility with them took time. The participant stated that despite leadership being made aware of the cultural issues, they felt that despite the leadership knowing about culture issue, their lack of action to address it is decreasing their credibility with the followers.

One participant stated that there is a sense of favoritism in the hiring practices within their PEO. They stated that that one senior leader stated in a town hall meeting that all future senior level positions would be utilize the competitive hiring process and shortly after that town hall, two senior level positions were filled without competition. They said that their followers took exception to this practice and it decreased their viewpoint of the leadership's credibility.

It is evident that the participants are passionate about credible leadership and certainly want the best for the LCMC and PEO communities. They provided candid responses and honest open feedback on the topic of credible leadership. They provided feedback on the importance and practice of the credible leadership traits and skills. Despite only having eight participants, there are several conclusions and recommendations that can be drawn from the findings, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

General Assessment Leadership Credibility

In overwhelming fashion, the general consensus across the interview participants was that their leadership was viewed as credible, not only internally, but externally as well. They also said that they were viewed as effective by external stakeholders. The questionnaire did not ask the participant to provide feedback on whether or not the followers believed that their leadership was credible, but should be considered in any further analysis. However, given the findings from chapter 4, there seems to be some cultural and hiring practice concerns that could infer a reduction in leadership credibility. These issues should be explored further with a following on study or survey of the followers. There are certainly opportunities for improvement and growth in each of these areas as highlighted in Chapter 4, but in general the overall view is that these leaders do not get to the position that they are in without being credible.

Credible Leadership Traits

This study shows that the amount of PEO experience does make a significant difference in the viewpoint of the credible leadership traits and a difference in the emotionally intelligent skill. However, when you compile the participants together with four having less than seven years of PEO experience and four with more PEO experience, the results are still very valuable and provide a great understanding of the importance and practice of credible leadership traits and skills.

As shown in Table 38, the participants said that the traits of honest, confident, risk-taker and adaptive were important, but only honest and confident were practiced in similar fashion. This leads to the conclusion that there is a strong correlation that all four of these traits do in fact lead to credible leadership since all participants said that their leadership was credible and rated them

an aggregate score above four. However, the drop in aggregate score in the practice of the risk-taker and adaptive traits suggests that there are opportunities for the leadership to improve, which would help improve their credibility with the workforce.

Table 38. Credible Leadership Traits Analysis

Traits	All Eight Participants	
	Importance	Practice
Honest	4.125	4.125
Confident	4	4.125
Risk-Taker	4.5 → 3.5	
Decisive	3.5	3.625
Adaptive	4.5 → 3.625	

Also noteworthy is that the credible leadership trait of decisive received the lowest aggregate rating for importance and practice. This does not mean that decisiveness is not a trait that leads to credible leadership, but it does suggest that within PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS or even DoD for that matter, might not be as important to being viewed as a credible leader. Perhaps not enough of the decisions reside at the PEO level to make this trait of increased importance, but the feedback from the PD/PMs seemed to suggest that it was a roadblock for some of their programs. With that being said, decisiveness is an important trait and it is an opportunity for improvement to build additional credibility within their respective organizations.

Credible Leadership Skills

As shown in Table 39, the participants said that the skills of competent, planner, communicator and emotionally intelligent were important, but the skill of communicator was not practiced in comparison to its importance. The drop in the aggregate score does suggest that there is opportunity for improvement within the respective PEOs.

Table 39. Credible Leadership Skills Analysis

Skills	All Eight Participants	
	Importance	Practice
Competent	4.75	4.5
Planner	4.5	4.25
Interpersonal	3.75	3.375
Communicator	4.5 → 3.625	
Emotionally Intelligent	4.125	4.375

The participants said that their leadership did not place as much importance or practice on the interpersonal skill. One Participant suspects that the lower rating of importance of the interpersonal skill could be a function that leadership is required to travel a lot and just isn't around the participants and followers enough to reinforce the importance. However, one participant stated they were encouraged to over-communicate with their leadership to avoid surprises, so perhaps it is more important than the results suggest. Another participant said the leadership at times has ignored the smaller PMs and programs, which has led to morale issues with followers. The general inference of the participants' feedback confirms that interpersonal skills are more important than the current leadership places on them or practices them. This is an opportunity for improvement that would enable the leadership to increase its credibility with the PMs/PDs and the Followers.

This study was successful in gaining a better understanding of the importance and practice of credible leadership within PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS. It has shown that the amount of PEO experience that a PM/PD possesses does influence their assessment of their leadership. It has shown that all of the traits and skills of credible leadership are important and there is an opportunity for improvement in a few of them. It also suggests that further analysis

should be conducted given the limitation in the number of participants involved in this study. Credible leaders possess traits and skills that influence morale and inspire positive actions that lead to effective organizational performance. There is always room for improvement and this study has provided a blueprint for a more focused analysis in the future.

PEO Experience of Participants

The Participant responses for some of the credible leadership traits and skills suggests that the amount of PEO experience the PM/PD possesses does make a difference in the viewpoint of the leadership. As shown in Table 40, the cumulative score assigned to each of the credible leadership traits by each of the two groups is highlighted see, the PMs/PDs with less than seven years of experience view the importance and practice of the credible leadership traits higher than those with less than seven years of experience.

Table 40. Interview Results for Credible Leadership Traits

Traits	< 7 years PEO Experience		7+ Years PEO Experience	
	Importance	Practice	Importance	Practice
Honest	4.25	4.5	4	3.75
Confident	4.25	4	3.75	4.25
Risk-Taker	4.25	3.5	4.75	3.5
Decisive	4	4	3	3.25
Adaptive	4.5	4	4.5	3.25

However, in contrast, PEO experience did not lead to a significant difference in the participant's responses when they rated the importance and practice of the credible leadership skills, with the exception of emotionally intelligent. As shown in Table 41, the participants with seven or more years of PEO experience rated the skill of emotionally higher in importance and practice.

Table 41. Interview Results for Credible Leadership Skills

Skills	< 7 years PEO Experience		7+ Years PEO Experience	
	Importance	Practice	Importance	Practice
Competent	4.75	4.5	4.75	4.5
Planner	4.5	4.25	4.5	4.25
Interpersonal	4	3.5	3.5	3.25
Communicator	4.5	4	4.5	3.25
Emotionally Intelligent	3.75	3.75	4.25	4.75

Therefore, PEO experience of the participants does influence their viewpoints of their leadership's traits and skills. The research suggest that when a PM/PD has less than seven years of PEO experience, they view the credible leadership traits of their leadership higher than those with more than seven years of experience. In contrast, the research suggests that a PM/PD with more than seven years of PEO experience views the emotionally intelligent skill of their leadership higher than those with less than seven years of PEO experience.

Recommendations

As shown in Table 40 and 41, the amount of PEO experience that PMs or PDs possess does influence their viewpoint of the credible leadership traits and skills. A further study to determine why these differences exist is recommended. This study was focused on gaining an understanding of the importance and practice of credible leadership traits and skills within PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS. It is apparent that there may be some experience biases that need to be further explored, but were limited in this study given that number of focused-group participants that were allowed.

The PEO leadership should conduct a further analysis to gain a better understanding of the discrepancies in the importance and practice of the risk-taking, decisiveness and adaptability traits of its leadership in their next command climate survey. Perhaps the practice is related to the

particular leaders and that will change as new leaders transition between positions, but it could very well be a symptom of the processes that are in place within DoD, the PEO or the Government in general.

The PEO leadership should conduct further analysis to gain a better understanding of the discrepancies in the communicator and interpersonal skills in their next command climate survey. This phenomenon could be related to being in the defense industry or the individual leadership, but is worthy of further analysis.

The leadership should also consider adding questions to the next command survey concerning the current hiring practices and the current culture to gain a better understanding of how the followers feel about new people and the process at which hiring decisions are made. These are critical topics that need to be addressed that can only improve the credibility of the leadership.

References

“10 Traits”, (2012, January 17). 10 Traits of Effective Leaders.

LeadershipAndInfluenceBlog.com. Retrieved from <http://www.leadershipandinfluenceblog.com/10-traits-of-effective-leaders/>

“Better Buying Power” (2016). *Better Buying Power*. United States Department of Defense; Acquisition, Technology and Logistics. Retrieved from <http://bbp.dau.mil/background.html>

“Characteristics of Leadership” (2016). The Characteristics of Leadership – 7 Important Traits. *Leadership Toolbox*. Retrieved from <http://www.leadership-toolbox.com/characteristic-of-leadership.html>

Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. Pearson Education Inc.

“Effective Leader” (2015). What makes someone an effective leader? Survey Sampling International, LLC. Retrieved from <https://www.proopinion.com/en/blog/what-makes-someone-an-effective-leader>

Gleeson, B., (2016, November 9). 10 Unique Perspectives On What Makes A Great Leader. Forbes. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/brentgleeson/2016/11/09/10-unique-perspectives-on-what-makes-a-great-leader/#2ecee01389>

Heitzman, A. (2015, March 24). Leadership Credibility: 10 Qualities Every Employee Looks For in a Leader. *Inc.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.inc.com/adam-heitzman/leadership-credibility-10-qualities-every-employee-looks-for-in-a-leader.html>

Iacocca, L. & Whitney, C. (2007). *Where have all the leaders gone?*. New York, NY: Scribner, a division of Simon and Schuster, Inc.

Kendall, F. (2014). *Ethics and Acquisition Professionalism: It is All About Trust*. Defense AT&L Newsletter. Retrieved from http://bbp.dau.mil/docs/Ethics_and_Acquisition_Professionalism.pdf

Kendall, F. (2013). *The Under Secretary of Defense. Memorandum for Secretaries of the Military Departments Component Acquisition Executives Directors of the Defense Agencies. Subject: Key Leadership Positions and Qualification Criteria* [Memorandum]. Retrieved from <http://bbp.dau.mil/docs/11-08-13USD-ATL-KLP-MemoSignedwAttachment.pdf>

Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B. Z. (2011). *Credibility*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
Leadership Traits (2016). 3 Cs of Credibility. *LeaderWhoLeads.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.leaderwholeads.com/leadership-trait.html>

PEO CS&CSS. (2017). Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support. Retrieved from <http://www.peocscss.army.mil/>

PEO GCS. (2017). Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems Portal. Retrieved from <https://www.peogcs.army.mil/about.html>

Roach, D. (2016). 12 Characteristics of an Effective Leader. Likeateam.com. Retrieved from <http://likeateam.com/12-characteristics-of-an-effective-leader/>

Root III., G. N. (2016). Ten Ways to Build Credibility as a Leader. *smallbusiness.chron.com*. Retrieved from <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/ten-ways-build-credibility-leader-20954.html>

“Small-Business Leadership”, (2016, July 1). Need Leadership Inspiration? 10 Traits That Make a Small-Business Leader Successful. Frontier Business Edge. Retrieved from <https://business.frontier.com/blog/need-leadership-inspiration-10-traitsthat-make-a-small-business-leader-successful/>

Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

- ACAT.....Acquisition Category
- AMPVArmored Multi-Purpose Vehicle
- BBPBetter Buying Power
- DAUDefense Acquisition University
- DoDDepartment of Defense
- DWYSYWD ..Do What You Say You Will Do
- HERCULES ...Heavy Evacuation Recovery Combat Utility Lift and Evacuation System
- IRBInternal Review Board
- KLPKey Leadership Position
- LCMCLife Cycle Materiel Command
- LTULawrence Technological University
- MAIS.....Major Automated Information System
- MDAPMajor Defense Acquisition Programs
- MRAPMine Resistant Ambush Protected
- PEO CS&CSS Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support
- PEO GCSProgram Executive Office Ground Combat Systems
- PDProduct Director
- PMProduct Manager
- SSCFSenior Service College Fellowship
- USD (AT&L) .Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics

Appendix A – IRB Training Certificate**Certificate of Completion**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that
Chad Stocker successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course
"Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 10/30/2016.

Certification Number: 2225210.

Appendix B – IRB Approval



Institutional Review Board
Office of the Provost
research.ltu.edu irb@ltu.edu

December 13, 2016

Chad Stocker, MBA Candidate, DAU SSCF Global Leadership and Management
Lawrence Technological University
College of Management
cstocker@ltu.edu

Dear Mr. Stocker,

I am pleased to report that the IRB application to conduct research with human participants for your MBA thesis “Understanding the Importance and Practice of Credible Leadership at Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS) and Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support (PEO CS&CSS)” has been approved under the Expedited review path for a period of one year, December 13, 2016 – December 13, 2017.

The IRB is satisfied that the following three ethical concerns regarding the treatment of your human participants have been addressed in your research protocol: (1) The research involves interviewing participants who will voluntarily consent to participate in the study; (2) Participants who will voluntarily consent to complete the survey are free to withdraw from the study at any time; (3) You do not have any copyrighted devices in your survey and/or you are using original devices and/or devices in the public domain and/or devices you are permitted to use via fair use for educators; (4) You have identified potential risks to you and the participants; and (5) You have assured that a balance exists between potential benefits of the research to the participants and/or society and the risk assumed by the participants.

Please contact the IRB if you require an extension to your project after one year. Please note you must contact the IRB if you make a change to your research protocol that impacts the ethical treatment of your research participants. Please do not hesitate to contact the IRB if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Cole".

Matthew Cole, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Lawrence Technological University
irb@ltu.edu o: 248.204.3096 f: 248.204.3099

The Lawrence Tech IRB is organized and operated according to guidelines of the United States Office for Human Research Protections and the United States Code of Federal Regulations and operates under Federal Wide Assurance No. FWA00010997 that expires 02/23/2021.

Lawrence Technological University

College of Architecture and Design | College of Arts and Sciences | College of Engineering | College of Management
21000 West Ten Mile Road, Southfield, MI 48075-1058 | 248.204.4000 p | 248.204.3727 f | ltu.edu

Appendix C – Focused Group Interview Confidentiality Agreement

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Name of Signer: Chad Stocker

During the course of my activity in collecting, analyzing and/or accessing data for the project or the database "Understanding the Importance and Practice of Credible Leadership at Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS) and Program Executive Office Combat Systems and Combat Service Support (PEO CS&CSS)" I will have access to information which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signed this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Type your full name: Chad Stocker

Type your email address: Chad.Stocker@dau.mil

Enter today's date: 12/06/2016

IRB Policy on Electronic Signatures

Lawrence Tech's IRB operates in a nearly paperless environment, which requires reliance on verifiable electronic signatures. Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically. The Research Coordinator will verify any electronic signatures that do not originate from a password-protected source (i.e., an email address officially on file with Lawrence Tech).

Appendix D – Focused Group Interview Questionnaire

Title: Understanding the Importance of Credible Leadership at Program Executive Office Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS) and Program Executive Office Combat Support and Combat Service Support (PEO CS&CSS)

Purpose: The purpose of this research study is to gain an understanding of the importance of credible leadership at Program Office Executive Ground Combat Systems (PEO GCS) and Program Executive Office Combat Systems and Combat Support Systems (PEO CS&CSS) in order to enhance future leadership growth and training opportunities.

Credible Leaders: Credible leaders possess traits and skills that influence morale and inspire positive actions that lead to organizational performance.

Leadership: When answering the following questions, “leadership” refers to those individual(s) in your chain of command that have the most significant impact on your program.

Followers: When answering the following questions, “Followers” refers to those individual(s) that work inside your program office.

Reminder: Participating in this interview is voluntary, anonymous and non-attribution. You can stop the interview at any point without prejudice and we can dispose of any written materials prior to my departure.

Interview Questions

- 1) How many years have you worked within your current Program Executive Office?
 less than 1 year
 1-3 years
 4-6 years
 6 years or more
- 2) Have you worked in any other Program Executive Office? If so, what PEO(s) and roughly how long did you work there?
- 3) How many years of acquisition experience do you have?
 less than 1 year
 1-3 years
 4-6 years
 6-8 years
 8 years or more
- 4) What is your overall assessment of your current leadership's credibility? Do they do what they say they will do? Do you have any examples?
- 5) Is your leadership viewed as credible by external stakeholders?
- 6) Is your leadership viewed as effective by external stakeholders?
- 7) What importance does your leadership place on establishing trust with your followers?
 Very Important
 Important
 Moderately Important
 Slightly Important
 Not Important
- 8) According to your followers, how often does your leadership make decisions that are in the best interest of the organization?
 Almost Always
 Often
 Sometimes
 Seldom
 Never

9) What importance does your leadership place on exhibiting confidence in your decisions and actions?

- Very Important
- Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

10) According to your followers, how often does your leadership make sound and logical decisions?

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

11) What importance does your leadership place on taking calculated risks?

- Very Important
- Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

12) According to your followers, how often is your leadership willing to take calculated risks?

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

13) What importance does your leadership place on making timely decisions?

- Very Important
- Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

14) According to your followers, how often does your leadership make timely decisions?

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

15) What importance does your leadership place on adapting to the situation?

- Very Important
- Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

16) According to your followers, how often does your leadership adapt to the situation?

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

17) What importance does your leadership place on professional development?

- Very Important
- Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

18) According to your followers, your leadership either has or pursues the skill sets required to lead the organization?

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

19) What importance does your leadership place on aligning program actions with the PEO vision and mission?

- Very Important
- Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

20) According to your followers, how often do the leadership-directed tasks align with the vision and mission of the organization?

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

21) What importance does your leadership place on interacting positively with the Followers of your organization?

- Very Important
- Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

22) According to your followers, how often does your leadership interact with the Followers in an approachable and open manner?

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

23) What importance does your leadership place on effective communication?

- Very Important
- Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

24) According to your followers, how often does your leadership communicate effectively?

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

25) What importance does your leadership place on emotional awareness and control?

- Very Important
- Important
- Moderately Important
- Slightly Important
- Not Important

26) According to your followers, how often does your leadership maintain emotional awareness and control?

- Almost Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Seldom
- Never

27) Is there anything else you would like to add in regards to the topic of Credible leadership?

Appendix E – OPSEC Approval

E-mail Form	Print Form						
TACOM OPSEC REVIEW CERTIFICATION (OPSEC Program is Governed by AR 530-1, Operations Security)							
I am aware that there is foreign intelligence interests in publicly available information; I have sufficient technical expertise in the subject matter to certify that it is appropriate to release this information to the public, because there are no operational, legal, or security reasons for withholding its release. Information that was given a previous OPSEC Review does not require a second review, unless the original information has been changed.							
DESCRIPTION OF INFORMATION TO RECEIVE OPSEC REVIEW							
Title/Description of item to be released: Understanding the Importance and Practice of Credible Leadership at PEO GCS and PEO CS&CSS							
(STEP 1) Author/Originator Chad Stocker	Organization DAU SSCF / PEO GCS	Phone #: 586-216-8904					
Are you a contractor? YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input checked="" type="radio"/>	If YES, Contract #: _____						
Forum where this information is to appear: DTIC							
Purpose of release: Public Release into the DTIC system as part of the DAU SSCF requirement.							
Product Format (check one): <input checked="" type="radio"/> Article <input type="radio"/> Briefing <input type="radio"/> Web Site <input type="radio"/> Equipment Display <input type="radio"/> Video Tape <input type="radio"/> Brochure <input type="radio"/> CD							
(STEP 2) TECH REVIEWER/TEAM LEADER: Charles Parsons	Grade: NH-IV	Position: M88 Modernization APM					
Signature PARSONS.CHARLES.DAVID.1095991374	Phone: (586) 282-0974						
Digitally signed by PARSONS.CHARLES.DAVID.1095991374 Date: 2017.04.13 12:40:03 -04'00'							
(STEP 3) Gov't Supervisor/Assoc Dir: Ronald J. Bokoch	Grade: NH-IV	Position: DPD Combat Recovery Systems					
Signature BOKOCH.RONALD.J.1031883349	Phone: (586) 282-3880						
Digitally signed by BOKOCH.RONALD.J.1031883349 Date: 2017.04.13 13:55:53 -04'00'							
(STEP 4) Gov't Contracting Officer (if applicable): _____							
Signature	Phone:						
(STEP 5) Legal Office Review (if applicable): _____							
Signature	Phone:						
(STEP 6) G2/G3 (OPSEC Officer): David A. Hazelip							
Signature HAZELIP.DAVID.ALAN.1107213127	Position: Security Supervisor						
Digitally signed by HAZELIP.DAVID.ALAN.1107213127 Date: 2017.04.13 13:19:16 -04'00'							
Phone: 586 282-5660							
(STEP 7) Public Affairs Reviewer: Ashley Givens							
Signature GIVENS.ASHLEY.FRANCES.1276317829	Position: PAO						
Digitally signed by GIVENS.ASHLEY.FRANCES.1276317829 Date: 2017.04.01 13:45:33 -04'00'							
Phone: 586-282-2288							
Initial and Date in the appropriate box	Author	Tech Reviewer	Gov't Supervisor	Gov't Cont. Officer	Legal	G2/G3 (OPSEC Off)	Public Affairs
a. Concur for Public Release HAD.PHILIP.C.1095991374 1362612000	STOCKER.C.1095991374 1095991374	PARSONS.CHARLES.DAVID.ALAN.1031883349	BOKOCH.RONALD.J.1031883349			HAZELIP.DAVID.ALAN.1107213127	GIVENS.ASHLEY.FRANCES.1276317829
b. Concur for Public Release w/Comment _____							
c. Nonconcur _____							

Appendix F –Author Biography

Chad P. Stocker

Mr. Chad Stocker is a Senior Service College Fellow and most recently served as the Weapon Systems Review (WSR) / Program Objective Memorandum (POM) Staff Officer in the office of Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Plans, Programs and Resources (DASA PPR) under the leadership of Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology (ASA(ALT)).

From 2014-2016, Mr. Stocker served as the Program Officer in the Army's Combat Recovery Systems (CRS) program (ACAT 1C) responsible for the development, planning and execution of the M88 heavy recovery vehicle modernization plan. From 2012-2014, he served as the Assistant Product Manager (APM) in the Army's \$50B Ground Combat Vehicle (GCV) program (ACAT 1D), responsible for managing the cost, schedule, performance, and supportability of a 30 month Technology Development contract for the next generation Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV).



Mr. Stocker's previous assignments include serving as an Energy Liaison on the Contingency Basing Initiative (2011), ASA(ALT) Department of the Army Systems Coordinator (DASC) for Project Manager GCV (2010-2011), Procurement Analyst for Product Manager Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (PdM JLTV, 2010), and Product Integrator for Product Manager Bradley (PdM Bradley, 2007-2010).

Prior to entering civil service in 2007, Mr. Stocker held several positions with Chrysler Group L.L.C. (formerly DaimlerChrysler) to include serving as a Powertrain Engine Components Buyer (2003 and 2005-2007), Electrical / Electronic Supplier Quality Leader (2004-2005), Vehicle Launch Quality Engineer (2004), Chassis Component Design Engineer (2003), Vehicle Durability Engineer (2003), Assembly Plant Supplier Quality Specialist (2000 and 2002), and Chassis Commodity Supplier Quality Specialist (2001-2002).

Mr. Stocker is currently enrolled in the Global Leadership and Management graduate program at Lawrence Technological University. He holds a Masters of Business Administration degree from Lawrence Technological University (2010), a Masters of Systems Engineering degree from Oakland University (2004), a Bachelors of Mechanical Engineering degree from Oakland University (2002), and an Associates of Science degree from St. Clair County Community College (1999).

Mr. Stocker is an Acquisition Corps Member (2009). He holds Level III certifications in both Program Management (2011) and Systems Planning, Research, Development and Engineering (2009). He is a graduate of the United States Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC) Competitive Development Group (CDG, 2013), the Chrysler Institute of Engineering (2002), and is also certified as a Reactive Blackbelt Journeymen (Shainin L.L.C., 2006). His awards include the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service (2014 and 2016), and a Special Act Award recipient (PdM JLTV 2010).

(Current as of 20 March 2016)